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EDITORIALS

Manœuvre or Message

Wherever one looks one sees Christian groups feverishly manœuvring to maintain their position in the midst of a civilization which does not recognise the Christian community as a decisive or even important factor in the realization of its destiny. In many lands Christian organizations are on the defensive. The executive secretaries and administrators who guide these organisations are frantically working out plans for strategic retreats in an effort to stave off as long as possible the admission of defeat in their generation. Some have frankly capitulated before the pressures of modern civilization and by labelling the objectives of civilization "Christian" have nationalized their apostasy. In other words the dominant, though by no means universal, strategy of the Christian community at the present time is an institutional strategy. It is a strategy of technique and method as contrasted with a strategy of content and intention. It represents faith in manipulation and adjustment rather than faith in the possibility of individual and social transformation and recreation. The most characteristic Christian response to the problems of the modern world can best be described by the word "manœuvre" rather than by the word "message".

It should be obvious to anyone who is familiar with the genius of contemporary civilization and who has some comprehension of the significance of historic Christianity that in the game of manœuvre between civilization and the Christian community civilization will win hands down. The eventual defeat and elimination of the Christian community from this particular game is made doubly certain by the fact that in adopting the strategy of manœuvre Christians have relegated to oblivion the one unique contribution which they have to make — the affirmation of an authentic word about God and his relation to man.

May not the reason why so many of the best minds in the universities are not drawn to Christianity be just this, that the Christian community is not providing them with what they instinctively feel to be its primary function to provide — namely a clear and deep witness to the Christian interpretation of the meaning of life. They see Christians on every hand manœuvring to attract their interest ; but no one explains to them the *content* of the Christian faith, they hear no Christian message. And because they want something which religious manœuvring is incapable of providing they are forced to go their own way in order to maintain their self respect.

The strategy of manœuvre has failed. The strategy of message remains to be tried. But to affirm a message is infinitely more difficult than to plan a manœuvre. The latter may be and usually is merely a clever device invented by a human brain. On the other hand a message, if true, is God-given. God is the source ; man is the medium. The initiative is with God ; the actualization is with man.

The part man plays in the expression of God's creative activity is, however, far from negative. Man is no mere passive receiving station. The possibility of God's word breaking through depends to a considerable extent upon man's spiritual sensitiveness — his receptivity to the divine initiative. It also depends to some extent upon man's participation in the creative fellowship of the Christian community. By sharing the insight of others, by learning from the experience of different Christian communions

through coming to understand something of the priceless heritage of their respective traditions it is possible to set going a process of mutual cross-fertilization as a result of which men may not only become more sensitive to God's word but may also become much more capable of comprehending it in terms of the life of their day.

It is just at this point that the Federation may be able to render a unique service to the whole Christian Church. The Federation may be able to facilitate the inter-flow of living currents between groups and to increase the likelihood of cross-fertilization by providing occasions when men and women from different parts of the Christian world can work and think together.

The Federation can create conditions and stimulate lines of thought and activity favorable to the affirmation of a message. That is precisely what the Message Commission is now trying to do. But the Federation itself cannot declare a message. No human collectivity can do that — not even a Christian fellowship. A collectivity cannot declare a message because a message is only a message when it is the utterance of organic life, and the attempt to convert it into a representative formula to which all the members of a group will assent automatically transfers it from the category of the quick to the category of the dead. No matter how vital a message is it cannot survive being embalmed in a conference resolution. A vital message does not in fact exist except as it is uttered by flesh and blood individuals speaking out of their own dynamic insight into the meaning of life as God gives them insight.

World-transforming movements invariably spring out of the insight of individuals who are realistically aware of the needs of their time and who say what God wishes them to say in relation to those needs. An organization, an institution, a committee never has and never will initiate a world-transforming movement. The function of organizations is to provide the channels through which a movement will need to flow if it is to be socially effective. They help to prepare the individual for the enterprise ; they make available to the individual the information and experience essential to correct-

ing his analysis and deepening this insight. They furnish the necessary social *milieu* as a soil in which the new movement can take root ; they facilitate the appearance of dynamic social forms which demonstrate the movement's ethical reality ; and they supply the means of building up fellowship groups which, as time goes by, will conserve some of the values gained. All this and more new organizations may do in the days when they are still flexible and dynamic and before they have crystallized into rigid and insensitive forms. But even in the apostolic period of a movement's life the organization is never capable of affirming its message. The actual break through of new life occurs in and through individual men and women, and not in and through the social collectivities which these have organized.

This fact places a tremendous responsibility upon those who happen to have been chosen leaders of the national movements and of the Federation. Have we each a message of our own ? Are we going to affirm that message ? The Federation as a spiritual fellowship and not as an organization has a message. But that message is in the last analysis the message which each one gives who has learned the meaning of the Federation's fellowship. As Dr. Visser 't Hooft said at Zuylenveld " the message of the Federation is the message each of us gives after listening to the others ".

The test of our leadership is whether each of us is utilizing, to the utmost of his ability, the spiritual resources which the Federation has made available to him. Are we eager to have our own insights corrected and enriched by the insights of others ? Do we long for a message which, while rooted in our respective religious traditions, will not be limited to the relativities of those positions ? Do we recognize that no national message, no American message, no European message, no Oriental message can be the universal word of God for our day ? We are all citizens of a new world civilization. No revelation of God in national forms can meet the deepest spiritual needs of that civilization. The utilization of the total resources of all the Christian groups combined is an essential condition of a fuller revelation of God in the life of the modern world. The time for manœuvring is past.

The time for the affirmation of our message has come. The world waits for some living word. Have we a word of God to give ?

F. P. M.

After a Year of Message Study

Different generations of students in the World's Student Christian Federation have different pioneering tasks. There have been generations which discovered the responsibility of Christian students toward the missionary enterprise ; others have explored the social and international implications of Christian living ; others again the meaning of the " Una Sancta ".

Which is the pioneering task of this present generation in the Federation ? This question has been answered by the leaders of the Federation when they asked the national movements a year ago to make the question of the Federation's message central in their work. It has also been answered by the national movements themselves when they responded as readily as they did. Thus, during the past year the Federation has become committed to a common study of the implications of Christian truth for the modern world in order to be a more effective witness to the student world.

It is not so that we have chosen this emphasis as one of the most interesting among many others. It is rather forced upon us by the world outside as well as by our movement itself. Standing at one of the important sectors of the front we cannot fail to see that the Christian cause is under fire. Nor can we escape the fact that our response to the challenge of the modern world is immensely weakened by the absence of a clear common message and by our easy acquiescence in our own disunity. And so we have started upon this new adventure wondering where it will lead us.

This is not the place to give a full account of the varied reactions of the national movements to the Federation's request for concentration upon a restudy of the essentials of Christian conviction in relation to our time. But a few general impressions may be given.

As one looks back on the last twelve months one is struck by the fact that the message study has already become a powerful element of unification in the Federation's life. It means something when movements as far apart as those of Australia and of Sweden, or of India and France, concentrate attention on the same central problems. At the same time it is curious to notice how few are the movements which have felt that they could afford to neglect this study. If there has been any doubt among us as to the general and world-wide character of the need for a rethinking of our fundamentals, a glance at the letters and reports from all parts of the world ought to dispose of it. It has become more obvious than ever that we are all of us in the same critical situation. There is no student Christian movement which can feel any longer that it knows what it ought to know and that it does what it ought to do. We are all faced with challenges which require a truth greater than the truth which we have discovered so far. And we are all of us therefore once more in the position of the "poor in spirit" hoping intensely for a fuller message from God which we may pass on to our fellow students.

The first year of message study has also shown us clearly what kind of message we should and should not look for. We have come to realize that our message study may not deteriorate in an ideological game — a juggling with mere ideas and "isms". The danger is real, for it is of the very essence of our approach that we try to face the great forces which shape our modern world. But how many are there among us who have a sufficiently acute sense of spiritual realities to speak about these forces as realities and not as "ideas"? How many of us have the spiritual imagination and sympathy to know inwardly what grim reality there is in the persecutions of Christians in Russia or in the struggle between Christian faith and nationalism in Europe and Asia? We may not take the line of least resistance and withdraw within the sphere of our immediate and petty local concerns. Somehow we must begin to make these forces, about which we speak too often as mere spectators, become part and parcel of our own spiritual struggles. For only so will we

be able to find a message which is both an answer to the need of our time and truly real to ourselves.

We have also come to learn what it means that our message must be dynamic and that we will not and cannot imprison it within resolutions and statements. We are being educated to patience. The difficulties of our message study teach us that the life of faith is a life in which we may not anticipate, in which we wait for God to give us His gift at His time.

It was the outcome of the Leaders' Retreat of the Federation at Zuylenveld in Holland last summer that our message is eternal and unchanging in so far as it is the Word of God, but, at the same time, never ready, never complete, never adequate, in so far as it is *our* message. We are not out for quick results and clever formulations. We are starting upon an adventure which has no temporal goal. Our job is to persevere in this task as in other tasks which were once in the realm of pioneering. It is easier to pioneer than to carry on. If we have seen the greatness of the task as well as of the need we shall be compelled to ask God for that kind of perseverance which belongs to the life of faith in Him.

V. 't H.

A Tentative History of the Federation Message

SUZANNE DE DIETRICH

" Whence and Whither " ? Some preliminary remarks

This is a " tentative " history : a full study of the spiritual pilgrimage of the World's Student Christian Federation through the now nearly thirty-six years of its existence, would presuppose a thorough study of all movements involved.

The Federation is not an abstract entity. We cannot measure its growth by summing up the achievements or non-achievements of its constituent bodies, nor by its joint manifestations — let us say world conferences and general

committees, — any more than one could feel the living pulse of a nation only by studying each province apart from the others, or by just attending some sessions of its Parliament. The Federation is a living body of which we all are parts.

As would be true of most religious movements, one might say that there has been a first period in Federation life, extending over about twenty years, when the Federation was truly embodied in a few leading personalities, and foremost in the outstanding personality of its founder. To many "*the Federation was Dr. Mott*" — (and Mr. Wilder, and Miss Rouse, and Baron Nicolay). Then a time came when each movement had more and more a life of its own. No man today, whatever his genius, could claim that he represents the Federation, and it needs the diversity of a whole staff of men and women to express and carry on all the currents of life and thought embodied in that simple world — the Federation.

Are these currents of life and thought at least converging currents, or are they diverging more and more? The question has been raised many times in the last ten years — at Beatenberg, at High Leigh, at Nyborg. The view was expressed that the Federation had started in unity but that there was unity no more. Is this true? How far and in what sense is it true? Let us face the issue boldly.

Beyond question great changes have occurred. The Federation started as a fellowship of men closely linked together not only by a common faith but by the same tradition. It has grown into a more and more inclusive body, binding together men and women belonging to all branches of Christianity, men and women who bring into their fellowship all the richness of their racial, national, and spiritual heritage. The thought life of the countries in which some of our movements have grown has undergone, on the other hand, such tremendous changes in the last ten or fifteen years that the swing of the pendulum has gone from religious conservatism to, in some cases, the most radical views. These differences of background should never be forgotten when one tries to understand our history. Thirty years ago continental

Europe was under the spell of scientific and materialistic teaching and the Christian student movements had to stand as minority movements, quite conscious of holding a position alien to the philosophy of life of an overwhelming religiously indifferent or hostile majority. They developed a "minority psychology" with its strength and weaknesses a certain self-consciousness in their intellectual and spiritual thinking, a strong type of leadership and very close bonds inside the fellowship, but in many cases a too ready acceptance of this minority position which left the large bulk of students untouched. Anglo-Saxon countries, at that time, were still under the influence of the great evangelistic and missionary movements of the XIXth century. Numerically strong movements developed; some of them were to become not only a religious but a great social factor in university life and even the life of the country as a whole. This was equally true of the work developed under Anglo-Saxon influence in so-called mission lands. But the day was bound to come when "modern thought", be it under the form of science, psychology, humanism or communism, would challenge the Christian position; and the larger, the more democratically run the student movement, the greater the crisis involved in life and thought.

Last but not least, the Federation would not be worthy of its name as a world movement and a youth movement if the crises of war and after war years, the tremendous changes which have occurred in Russia and the Far East, had left it unmoved and unshaken. The new philosophy of life which has developed in recent years is the greatest challenge Christendom has had to face since the early centuries. As Christians and students we share in the process, we suffer under it and have to struggle through it and find our own way out; no ready-made answers passed on by former generations would be of any help. We are "in it".

And because we are "in it", because each of our movements has to fight its own fight, our unity is nothing simple, but something to be achieved, a permanent act of faith.

May the following attempt to get at the inner meaning of our history stimulate thought and may our national

movements start a serious study of their own as to the "Whence and Whither" of our common life.

The First Twenty Years : Building up a World Movement

The men who felt called by God to lay the foundations of the World's Student Christian Federation in Vadstena in 1895, were men of strong evangelical faith, men who shared the same vision — the world to be won to their Lord, the universities, strategic points in this world's conquest. They were men who conceived only one way of salvation, the way of personal conversion, of prayer and faith, whose main emphasis was laid on the study of the Bible and corporate prayer. Dr. Mott himself and several of his colleagues had been won to the missionary cause through Moody's evangelistic campaigns and the Northfield Student Conference of 1887. The British Movement was born at Keswick, the living centre of British pietism, and held its conferences there for several years. The German Movement was deeply rooted in the "Gemeinschaften", — the strong pietistic movement which developed in Germany a new and living type of community life in a time when the official Church seemed swept by the rationalistic tide. And these are only a few typical examples, of which Baron Nicolay, the great pioneer of the Russian Movement a few years later, is still another illustration.

The spirit of a youth movement is best expressed in some popular slogans. The motto "Make Jesus King" which had originally been wired from Japan to Northfield, and from there found its way to Sweden, where it was decisive in the starting of the Swedish Movement, has been one of those ; we find it under a slightly altered form as the watchword of the French Student Christian Movement ("Faire Christ Roi"). Even more popular was the watchword of the American Volunteer Movement : "The evangelization of the world in this generation". These watchwords express the missionary emphasis, the dynamic conception of evangelism of those pioneering days. It was never believed that the whole world could be won to Christ's allegiance in the

space of one generation ; but it *was* believed that the Gospel should be preached to all nations and that it was the foremost responsibility of this generation of students to work towards that goal.

The basis of the Federation is simple with no attempt at formulating a dogmatic creed ; its object is (1) " to lead students to accept the Christian faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, according to the Scriptures, and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ ; (2) to deepen the spiritual life of students and to promote earnest study of the Scriptures amongst them ; (3) to influence students to devote themselves to the extension of the Kingdom of God ". But one point was emphatically stressed every time a national movement submitted its basis for acceptance into the world fellowship, namely that the acceptance of Jesus Christ as only Lord and Saviour should be stated in such terms as to allow of no possible misinterpretation. For this was the corner-stone on which the Federation was built. " Make Jesus King in every student's heart and life and in the whole world. Putting this as our aim, I need hardly say that the basis of a national movement should be nothing less than the deity of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ " (de Witt, Eisenach 1898). And some twenty years later looking back on the history of the Federation and stating its guiding principles,¹ Dr. Mott expresses himself in equally strong terms : " The corner-stone principle is the recognition of the supremacy and the universality of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His work as the only sufficient Saviour ".... " Wherever there has been any compromising or obscuring of this central principle, the association or movement concerned has wandered over comparatively barren wastes ". (J. R. Mott, " The World's Student Christian Federation ", 1920).

When one reads the reports of the first world conferences, one is struck by the fact that they deal above all with the

¹ The other "guiding principles" stated by Dr. Mott are : (2) interdenominational and interconfessional character of the Federation ; (3) independence and autonomy of national movements ; (4) mutual obligation of the movements in the Federation ; (5) the Federation a non-political body always dealing from a world point of view.

great realities of spiritual life. In his report on the Eisenach Conference (1898), Dr. Fries notes that evenings have been kept free " chiefly to give time for silent waiting upon God " ; all decisions taken at the General Committee were taken by " unanimous vote " ; the unity was " unity in the Holy Spirit ". A spiritual awakening in the universities should begin amongst the Christian students themselves, it means prayer " heart searching self-examination, consciousness of sin, depending on the Holy Spirit, winning others one by one, through tactful sympathy, prayer and faith ". Much thought is given to the discipline of spiritual life, to corporate Bible study and corporate prayer ; much stress is laid on the value of the Morning Watch.

At Versailles, three years later, the need of Christian apologetics, the need of thorough study, the need of relating the Christian faith to the whole of life, are stressed by French and Dutch speakers. The Transvaal war is the first occasion on which the bearing of Christian faith on politics is raised and discussed in the Federation and, as would be expected, the Dutch Movement gives the lead and exchanges correspondence with Great Britain. In Federation circles at least, it looks as if the " Social Gospel " originated not as is commonly believed in the United States of America, but in the Netherlands.

Another change occurs during the following years : in some movements at least, one witnesses a growing Church consciousness. As long as the national movements had been limited to pietistic circles, the main emphasis had been laid on personal conversion, in spite of the fact that a Church basis was sometimes required for membership (United States, Japan, etc...). Towards 1905 the Church of England group takes a more leading part in the destinies of the British Movement, and this means new trends of thought in the Christian Unions, both in the national and international field ; Great Britain will be in the history of the Federation a kind of experimental field in the realm of interdenominationalism. ' The Church Movement ' of Sweden, a few years later (1907-1911) is another instance of a student movement breaking off from pietism and opening new ways.

The move came from the Uppsala students ; it was inspired by a strong national feeling (following the separation of the two kingdoms 1905), but it means theologically a far-reaching and significant event, a conscious rejection of the religious subjectivism which had been predominant in most Protestant countries for the last fifty years. Twenty years later we witness a similar movement in most countries of Europe¹.

The Tokyo Conference, 1907, is a significant event in Federation history, being our first contact, as a corporate body, with the Far East. Dr. Mott's recent tours in China and Korea had revealed unprecedented opportunities ; mass meetings were held, thousands of students flocked in ; hundreds registered for instruction in Christianity. At Tokyo, for the first time, Oriental speakers took a leading part in a world conference, and stressed the fact that in the near future the chief responsibility for evangelizing the Orient should rest with the Orientals themselves. The Tokyo Conference report offers another line of interest. It gives a kind of survey of the religious life in Western countries at the time ; and these reports throw unexpected light on the tremendous differences of background and outlook in our different movements.

Professor Bois (France) takes pains to show that France is not altogether a pagan country, and stresses the spiritual awakening consequent on separation of the Church and State ; the British speaker, while acknowledging that "Christianity has always lived through the twelve and not through the five thousand", and that no nation may call itself Christian, feels entitled to say that "in no decent English society is anything like divorce or immorality so much as spoken about or thought of" .. "The women students are naturally kept under so wise a supervision that with them there is never a breeze of moral trouble"... As to Professor Gaucher, U.S.A., he believes in "an absolutely unparalleled

¹ All Christian students in Sweden did not follow the lead and a "Free Church Student Movement" soon came into being ; only in 1926 the two Movements joined together in order that both of them might belong to the Federation.

religious interest in American colleges " (quoted from Professor Harper, Chicago University)... " Never in the history of America was there such a large and superb body of young men and women of college education eagerly pressing into the hardest places for Christ and the Church " (quoted from Hardy)... " Never in any age nor in any land was that which saves and sanctifies presented more clearly and forcefully than it is, by word and life, in the Christian Church in the United States at the present time " (Dr. J. Watson)... " There can be no question that whenever an issue of righteousness is put before the nation, the nation decides rightly " (Watson). " The presidents of the State, military, naval, undenominational as well as denominational colleges and schools for higher education, are almost to a man believers in some form of Christianity "... " The great majority of them are evangelical Christians. This is almost equally true of leading professors. If an occasional one is found who is not in any sense a Christian, he is relatively so rare as to be very conspicuous. Christianity is the pervading and directing influence in American education "...¹

The German report needs special mention. In recent years, " American optimism " and " German pessimism " have frequently been opposed to each other, and have been explained away as due to economic and political factors. Now, this report, written in 1907, when German imperialism was at its height, is no less " pessimistic " than any post-war statement ; this pessimism has nothing to do with economic depression ; it is founded on a deep-rooted belief that there is a narrow door to the Kingdom and that no nation as such has ever entered it, nor will ever enter it. Germany, says the speaker, may be nominally Christian : going to the bottom of things, it is *not*. Classical antiquity has permeated it, politic powers have dominated it, and now modern thought — science, philosophy, historical research — challenges anew the whole Christian position ; and here is the fine

¹ By quoting Professor Gaucher we certainly do not mean to say that he is representative of the college men of his day ; many, probably, would have challenged his statement ; but that it could be thought, and written, helps to explain, we believe, the violent reaction we are witnessing today.

and courageous conclusion : “ However alarming these efforts may be with many, in one direction modern thought is very helpful to Christianity : it helps to discriminate between what is really Christian and what is not essentially Christian ”. Germany is already engaged in the loyal fight for pure Christian truth which the United States will have to engage in, under somewhat altered form, about twenty years later. And the central problem is stated in terms which remain exactly the same today : “ There remains only one question : is religion and the personality of Jesus to be looked at as a product of the forces living in and moulding the human race, as a phenomenon in the evolution of mankind ; or is the intervention of a superhuman power, a manifestation of God towards the salvation of man to be admitted ? This question, however, cannot be answered by philosophy or science ; it can only be settled by a decisive act of the individual, by faith. One alternative is left to us, either to trust in man or to trust in God, either to trust in the scientific dogma of evolution or to believe in the unique message of Jesus of the love of the heavenly Father, Who ‘gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever trusts in Him should not perish but have everlasting life ’ ”. (Th. Mann, Tokyo 1907).

Movement after movement will have to face the issue in varied forms. No student movement can be confined within the hot house of spiritual realities. “ The Christian unions began with small groups of earnest and devout students who had few doubts... Times have changed in most movements. The irresistible intellectual movement, historical, scientific, and critical, known as Modern Thought, has been acting as a powerful solvent in theological as well as in other regions. And at the same time the student movements have grown steadily, and, while formerly most of them were made up of the more pious and definitely religious students, they now embrace men in all stages of spiritual development, professing all varieties of belief, and shading off into varying stages of doubt and perplexity concerning the Christian faith. The result is that it is far harder than it used to be for the average Christian union member to keep his faith protected from question and

challenge as to its intellectual stability. Also the Christian student of today is less inclined to try and keep his faith unrelated to his general knowledge than was his predecessor of ten or twenty years ago. The scientific spirit of the day is making college men and women better students. Now all this has profoundly affected Bible study, for in the midstream of the unrest of today stands the Bible. It is a veritable storm-centre. The nature of its authority is in continual dispute, its inspiration is challenged, and its doctrines are subjected to searching criticism and enquiry". (Tissington Tatlow, Constantinople 1911).

The continental movements had more or less been "built up to face the storm" if we may put it thus. Now the storm rages on the British coast; in the following years it will cross the Atlantic and the Pacific, and follow its course until no university escapes the challenge.

The Past Ten Years : " Do We Still Have a Common Message ? "

The world war was a severe test imposed upon any world movement. It left the unity of the Federation unbroken. Is it not highly significant that when, in the first meetings after 1918 doubts were expressed as to the reality of our unity, these were expressed not on political but on religious grounds? The question was not: have we the same political conceptions, can we forgive each other, but *have we the same Christ and the same Gospel?* None who lived through it could ever forget that evening in St. Beatenberg, 1920, when the question was raised and delegate after delegate rose to express in simple words what the Cross meant to him. During the following years every international discussion in Federation circles focussed on the "apocalyptic" versus the "evolutionary" conception of the Kingdom of God. Why is this?

The first effect of the war, though not the most lasting one, had been in many countries a displacement of interest from the spiritual to the social. A sudden cleavage was felt to exist between two generations — the one which had "prepared the war" or at least failed to prevent it, and the

one which had fought it. Youth movements arose in passionate revolt against the "institutions of the past", Churches, missionary societies, any type of thought which might be labelled "conservative" or "conventional". The favourite motto in many countries, most of all in America, became the "building up of a new world-order". The new gospel seemed to be "world peace" achieved by human goodwill. Old Europe shook its head and kept on talking of original sin; old Europe was hopeless. It had its idealistic youth movements, full of zest and hope; but those were carefully kept outside the Christian student movements.

Little seems left, after ten years, of that great idealistic tide of 1920. But the war brought with it some lasting changes.

First of all, the myth of so-called "Christian nations" did not survive. The "prestige" of the West is gone for ever; tribute may be paid to Western science, but no longer to Western civilization. The Chinese Renaissance Movement which came into being at the time of the Federation Peking Conference (1922), is a typical instance of the awakening of anti-Christian feeling and national consciousness in Far Eastern countries. "Modern thought" has its strongholds now in Japan and China as well as in Chicago or Sydney. In early Federation literature one might still find the word "pagan countries" as opposed to "Christian nations". Who would dream of using such words now? The world has become a unity in this sense that all great problems have become world problems, be it the industrial problem, the racial problem, or the question of "secularism". And this will mean a total change in missionary outlook; it will mean there are no more "sending countries" and "receiving countries", but the whole of Christendom is being exposed to the same testing fire, the testing fire of secularism, communism, and the rest; it means the whole of Christendom is compelled to rethink and restate its position in this moving XXth century world.

Nowhere has the challenge been so strongly felt as in the so-called "new countries", those who feel their history is in the making, like the Dominions and the United States

of America, or in the remaking like China. No values should be taken on credit, because they are "value of the past"; all of them should be rediscovered and retested. The spirit of the student movements should be one of adventure, the spirit of the pioneer, of the scout and trapper, transposed into the spiritual realm; an exploring of God's world under the open sky. To these, God's nature means more than mediæval cathedrals, and the high dome of the Nicene creed only hides the sun; to these the "sacrament of fellowship" seems more real a sacrament than the Holy Eucharist; and Jesus Himself appears as the One who dared to break away from the traditions and customs of His time to live the full life, the One who made the Absolute of God a reality in everyday life.

The number of movements which have changed their basis since the war is significant: in most cases the change was made in order to stress life rather than creed, to lay emphasis on the common aim and goal rather than on any unity already achieved. The most earnest students are often those who do not like to accept a basis which does state more than they can believe.

The Federation is, and should be, and wants to be, a fellowship of believers and seekers. And here lies the crucial difficulty which at certain moments, in a given country, or even in the Federation as a whole, may endanger its very existence; if the Federation became *only* a fellowship of seekers, it would cease to be a World's Student *Christian* Federation: it would cease to have a message to the world. There is no message where there is no revealed truth; no word from God to man.

It was no new thing in Federation history that a movement had to make its choice and decide if it would stand for a definitely Christian aim and purpose or be a "fellowship of people of goodwill". Most movements while discussing their basis had stood at the crossing of the roads and had made their choice. But now a new question arises: "What does Christianity mean?... ", and so divergent were the views expressed at the General Committees in High Leigh and Nyborg that the question — do we still stand for the

same thing ? — became a very real and burning one. Many then felt that the Federation “ was going through a crisis ”, more, that its very existence was at stake. Some friends went so far as to say that “ one could detect a lowering of the spiritual level ”, “ a tendency to waver and something like spinelessness ”... “ a deviation from the original fundamentals ”¹.

Much was true in this severe statement ; but it did not take into account the mental strain of the old countries which had suffered and the buoyancy of the “ young countries eager to try new ways ; and it was not utterly fair to the longing for Truth, the magnificent loyalty which asserted itself all through the most painful discussions. It is one of the beauties of Federation life, that we have the courage to disagree and to say so, and to struggle for unity in truth, be the price what it may.

Through the following years, from Nyborg 1926 and still more from Mysore 1928 to this day, we firmly believe one can trace in most movements a renewed interest for the definitely spiritual, as opposed to the more social and this-worldly aspects of Federation life, a reasserting of eternal values, an attempt at positive and constructive thought. There is a strong will to “ live the Christian life ” expressed in the way in which the Canadian and Australian Movements, for instance, centre their studies on the life and teaching of Jesus ; in the progress — in breadth and depth — made by the Indian Movement under most difficult circumstances ; in the building up of “ spiritual fellowships ” amongst Chinese students ; in the efforts made towards interracial fellowship in South Africa. In European countries one witnesses in student circles an awakening to the “ reality of God ” and to the “ reality of the Church ”. New schools of thought emphatically go back to the great teachings of the Reformation, centred on God and His Revelation, instead of man and his subjective experience ; and this, if not carried so far as to become sheer intellectualism, means a healthy reaction against an emotional type of religion which dangerously impoverished Protestant thinking in the XIXth

¹ Martzinkovsky, *The Student World*, October 1925.

century. There is a longing for constructive thought, for a "Weltanschauung" which does not only answer the individual's need for personal salvation but looks at the world as a whole as willed by God. There is a longing, too, in many circles, for spiritual life as lived in and through the Church; and this appears in most of our student circles as something utterly new. The strengthening of the Anglo-Catholic Movement in Great Britain, the sharing in our fellowship of Roman Catholic groups like the one in Vienna, most of all the influence of the Russian Orthodox Movement outside Russia, have brought into the Federation new streams of thought, a new sense of sacramental and liturgical life, a deeper longing for the unity of the Body of Christ, parallel with a keener sense, in each denomination and confession, of its own values and traditions.

There is scarcely any movement in the Federation world fellowship (the only exception might be the Finnish Movement), which stands today on exactly the same intellectual and spiritual premises on which it stood thirty years ago. Does this mean "a departure from our first love?" Does it not mean, rather, an enlarged and enriched life?

Where our Unity lies

When the early disciples left the Upper Room to preach the gospel to the world, they had experienced a unity that the Church on earth as a whole would never know again. Neither will the Federation, as a whole, ever experience again that unity in faith and that unity of vision, which those six men possessed who thirty-six years ago, in Vadstena Castle, at God's calling, made the Federation. Life means growth and struggle; unity, not static, but dynamic; unity, not a fact, but a permanent act of faith, to be believed in and fought and suffered for. Unity in truth, and truth in charity, are hard things to strive for. The Federation "suffers under the strife which tears the Christian Church and accepts humbly its share of the burden of division"¹; this should be true of

¹ Nyborg Statement on Interconfessionalism, Minutes, Nyborg 1926.

any kind of division, be it one of race, class or creed. *Our unity lies in God's calling*; not in what we are, but in Him who called us; not in what we may achieve, but in what He did, does, and will do, through our standing together in faith and obedience to Him, rests our hope and our security.

The Christian Message and the Student

THEOPHIL SPOERRI

The student is an absolute being: absolute in the literal sense of liberated, independent and also absolute in the sense of "aiming at the Absolute". The student is at the same time a young man and a theorist (i.e. an academic, an intellectual, a "clerc" in the sense of Julien Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs*). In him are found the good and bad qualities of these two types of men. Both qualities, the "young" and the "theoretical" are characterised by the fact that they are "absolute".

The student is theoretical rather than practical, a spectator rather than a man of action. He has no profession in the ordinary sense. He enjoys "academic freedom". Moreover he has the youthful longing for independence and protests against restraint and authority, against tradition, against the "old" rules and conventions. There may be inherent weaknesses in these tendencies: a lack of adaptation to reality, evasion of decisions, empty criticism, mere craze for novelty. But therein lies precisely the destiny of youth and of the intellectual, to question again and again what has already been realised by others, to bring everything that seemed firmly established once more into a state of flux.

The student turns his face against everyday compromise, against all relative things, because he serves absolute truth, absolute justice. He must be guided, not by circumstances, but by absolute values. He may lose himself in imaginary Utopias, in mere "problematics", in abstract ideals. But this is his very destiny: to struggle for the pure self, for an

unencumbered existence, for pure truth and justice, for the pure source of things.

The Christian message must be absolute in two senses: it must be an absolute, new, original message, but it must also be the message of the Absolute God.

The Christian message is no longer novel and fresh, as when it fell upon the ears of the early Christians. Paul knew how to become a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks. This does not mean, that he adapted the message to the views of his hearers, but only that he altered the "language" according to the ear of the hearers. The *Word* remained unchanged, but the *words* were always new. We have lost this living, original way of delivering our message. We fix our attention on words and do not notice that we have lost the *Word* itself. All our Christian words, sin, penitence, conversion, mercy, reconciliation, re-birth, sanctification — ring false. There is an artificial solemnity, an artificial gravity about them. They are rather stale, unaired, musty. They have become hackneyed in the Sunday School, in religious instruction, by those who preach by routine. We need to open the windows wide and recklessly, to let in the fresh air.

The message must be like a breeze from the source of life, a recreating breath. Christ's message broke on the moribund legal system of the old world like a spring morning. "Ye have heard how it was said to them of old time... But I say unto you". "Behold, I make all things new". "The blind see the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me".

A man must feel that the call is made precisely to his most living and most personal side. He is dealing with God the Creator, the newest, the most revolutionary, the most living force in the universe, and yet the Eternal; as new and at the same time, as old as the dawn, as the "thou" of lovers, as life and death. Thus we must translate the Bible, in such a way that the modern man may perceive that it is a matter of life and death to him.

In this new message, however, it is God Himself Who is to speak. The message will not be the messenger's own word, but the word of Him, Who sent him. Where God does not speak there is no message. There is no meaning behind all our words, unless *the Word* is heard in them. It does not depend on theology, but with or without theology on the word of God, the "logos Theou".

In order to find the new Word, we must keep our attention fixed at the same time on the modern man and on God. We emphasise "at the same time". If, on the one hand, we think only of modern man, we become the slaves of false actuality, of modernism; on the other hand, if we regard only the Word of God, without giving it a fresh interpretation in the light of the modern situation, it becomes a dead letter. The Bible must be retranslated every day, and it can only be translated by those who know both the original and the modern language.

We are to feel the pressure of the spiritual struggle of the present day. We are not to remain indifferent to all the questionings of modern men. We are also to pay attention to those questions which are not proclaimed upon the housetops with trumpets and eloquence. There are questions which stir behind an apparently sealed countenance. He who has ears to hear can hear even in impudent, presumptuous words the timid, suppressed note of interrogation. He who has eyes to see can see even in the gods of this world — those of the body, of sport, of idolised comradeship, and of the worship of life itself — the desperate search for the source of truth. If one really sees this questioning, this seeking, one's heart burns with pity for so much helplessness. But we must give ourselves time to listen properly to the questions, we must beware of silencing them too quickly with ready-made, obsolete answers. Who is there but the student, who has time to hear all these questions?

In order to hear God's Word we must place ourselves on the plane of God's *Word*. God speaks when *He* wishes. But there is one chosen place, where this Word that is never at our disposal when it is spoken, becomes audible; the word of the Old and the New Testament. The *voice* of God can

be heard everywhere — in the Upanishads, in nature, in the concert-hall ; but the *Word* of God is clearly perceived only in the Holy Scriptures. This is another privilege of the student ; that he can familiarise himself with the Word and with the wonderful wealth of its interpretation in all ages. It is the peculiar privilege and the special mission of the Student Christian Movement that it can and must undertake the study of the Bible with complete intellectual freedom, in a fresh way and with thoroughness. But it must not forget to attend to the burning questions. When someone complains, that the Bible has no more meaning for him, it is usually because he has not allowed himself to hear his own questionings and those of others. If a burning question is raised, the Word immediately becomes a living *answer*. The man who has no burning questions will receive no answer. For him the Bible says nothing. But he who steepes himself sufficiently in the Word will see that the answer was there before the question ; that the question could only be raised because the Word had been supreme since the beginning of time. So the two things are interconnected ; only he who has seen the light of the Word will perceive the dark shadows over human existence ; only he who has been thereby filled with despair, is enlightened and consoled by the Word. The most desparate situation is that in which there is neither the Word nor the questioning. This despair takes the form of indifference or of boredom drowned in restless activity. This indifference and boredom are today the most widely-diffused forms of deathly illness.

If the Word is to become dynamic we must turn our lives towards man and God. Here again we must emphasise that the two tendencies must be followed up at the same time. This is summarised in the two commandments : “ thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart... and thy neighbour as thyself ”. The two commandments are of equal importance ; one cannot be fulfilled without the other.

One's fellow student is to be taken seriously, as a human being. If our interest in him is merely theoretical we shall never get into close touch with him. No greater insult can be offered to a man, especially a young man, than that of

treating him simply as the object of missionary effort. There are all kinds of opportunities of getting into contact with one's "neighbour" in a human way, in the lecture room, on the way home, in student organisations, etc. One must, of course, forget oneself if one wishes to discover the other person. Perhaps nothing is more difficult for a young man, than to take others as seriously as himself ; but without this there can be no message. It is one of the Church's worst mistakes, that it has thought more of people's souls than of the people themselves.

But God must also be taken seriously. That is the crux of the whole matter. There are people of whom it can be said that they take the word of God seriously. They may or may not be theologians ; they are to be found in all religious sects and political parties. Taking something seriously does not mean pulling a long face ; it does not mean going solemnly through our daily routine. Seriousness is not the opposite of play ; there is often more seriousness in the play of children than in the affairs of adults. This attitude has preserved its full significance in the English "earnest" which means "enthusiastic, eager, seriously-minded, candid, ardent". A student will very seldom say "I am earnest" but rather "I am *in* earnest". This is what I mean about the people who take the Word seriously, in saying that for them "hearing" and "obeying" cannot be distinguished. And we are to become like these people ; we are to have more intercourse with these people. I should like to repeat this most emphatically, for the young man and the student do not like hearing it : however important it is to mix with modern youth, to understand their language, to listen to their questions, to reach an understanding of oneself through them it is just as important to have constant intercourse with serious Christians, whose faith is founded on the Bible. In this matter I cannot speak in any but a personal way. I have seen Christianity as a living reality in all its seriousness only in the lives of those people who took the Word seriously, who directed their course according to its teaching, who were inwardly changed thereby. Whenever I am in danger of losing myself in mere theory, when I want to escape real

decisions by burying myself in my study to think, and make hypothetical decisions, then I look at the simple people who, amid all the difficulties of their daily lives, are struggling for knowledge, for sanctification, for conversion of heart. I have spoken of the old, stuffy words ; I must admit, that I have never come across fresher, more genuine hearts than in the sphere where those words are heard.

But let us look at both sides of the question : what youth needs and what it is unconsciously longing for is reality, life. What the older generation needs and unconsciously longs for is freedom, the absolute. No definite link can be established between the "existential" to the "absolute". Hence there will always be friction between the young and the old ; they will always dispute and hurt one another. But he who recognises that this division exists in every human heart, and that the cleavage between the "existential" and the "absolute" is an inherent part of human nature, will not place himself on one side or the other, but will take up his cross and fix his gaze on Him, Who gave His life to bridge this gulf. There is then for him, who wishes to build a bridge between God and man (which is just what the message is !), no direct, perfect method of construction. We do not know how the connection is formed by which the Word comes to us ; we are conscious only of the tension, the resistance, the cleavage. But if we endeavour in all seriousness to build at both ends, invisibly yet surely, God will create the arch of the Word, of love, and of salvation to span the abyss.

I have purposely said nothing about the actual substance of the question and the answer, nor of the substance of the message. I only wished to point out the condition we must be in in order to receive the message. But it is possible to indicate how the modern man has arrived at this questioning about himself. The characteristic of the new era is, that man has made himself the measure of all things. He wants to be able to have the whole of reality at his disposal. Even the religious currents are infected with this dictatorial spirit ; modernism most of all, but also to a certain extent orthodox and pietism. We like to recognise the genuine faith and the

genuine repentance of these two forms of Protestantism. But the orthodox are in constant danger of subordinating the Word to their own inclinations, and the pietists run the risk of imagining that they can command their own experience of salvation.

But the error of judgment lies in the fact, that one disparages man, if one measures him only by human standards. We certainly see clearly enough today how commonplace men are becoming, if they eliminate all but the human standard of values. Hence arises the terrible disillusionment in every sphere, which we are experiencing at the present time. Human existence achieves depth and dignity only when it is measured by the standard of the Word of God. How this Word, ever old and ever new, must be retranslated, in order that the modern man shall listen to it, and discover the real depth and meaning of his life, that is the new message which we must seek. Perhaps we shall not find any fresh words ; but if we really live with our neighbour in perfect sincerity and in perfect love, if we really allow ourselves to become "converted" by God, then the old words will assume such a significance that the modern man will hear them as something new, calling him to definite decision in every walk of life.

Just a few concluding words on the Student Christian Movement. There has always been a cleavage between the "converts" and those who were merely "interested in religion". They have never been actually defined in this way, but the words show clearly what is meant. I do not believe that we shall ever put an end to this cleavage, nor that we ought to do so. The S.C.M. must keep its doors open to every kind of young, fresh life. But, on the other hand, there must also be points of connection in the other direction. There has never been a S.C.M. consisting simply of young converts. But a S.C.M. consisting only of those "interested in religion" will never be able to exist. It is only in remaining open on both sides (but really on *both* sides) that the S.C.M. can justify its existence. It is only by keeping itself open to all the questions that people are asking today, that it can find a living answer in the Word

of God. It is only by taking the Word of God seriously, that it can take seriously the modern man, in his searching questionings. The great task of the S.C.M. is to combine intellectual freedom and breadth with dynamic conviction. The task can only be fulfilled if Christ is really King.

The Message of the Federation

PIERRE MAURY

The following pages are not an article but a summary of some remarks brought forward at the Zuylenveld Retreat last summer during the closing session. They must therefore be read solely as a witness to the spiritual life of the Federation, to its Christian reality. To those who experience them, this life, this reality, are doubtless the most convincing message which we can possibly give to the world of students.

Is there *one* single Federation message? This is the question with which we were confronted, on the last of these days, during which we had studied together the conditions of our modern world, the difficulties with which it struggles, the spiritual effect on it of the prodigious development of our technical civilisation and by the conclusions of modern science and philosophy; days in which we tried also to discover together the fundamental principles of our Christian faith, and the practical standpoint, both individual and collective, which this faith demands of us.

As the first result of our discussions, we became aware that, in one sense, *there is no Federation message*, no new message that we do not already possess. Our task today is to be true, in a *new, actual, contemporary* way, to the message eternally given by God; the Revelation of this

message determines for us its content and its demands. Anyone who calls himself a Christian knows that he never needs to invent nor to discover the living truth by which he should live, and the good news of which he is to bring to the world. This truth is given to him ; he does not create it ; he has only to recognise and proclaim it. In other words the message is always Jesus Christ. Anyone who looked for a different message, or tried to adapt this one to the trends of the moment, would be creating nothing but weak illusions, which could not meet the needs of human suffering for more than a brief space.

But this statement is not so obviously true, that it requires no emphasis. In the first place we must guard against mistaken conceptions of the message, which we are always in danger of harbouring. Some of us often imagine it as a collection of theological formulae, in close conformity with the mentality of our age, and taking into due consideration the results of modern science and metaphysics ; others conceive of it as a moral code or as a social theory defining the catalogue of our duties. Others again think of the message as a certain spiritual method, a system of apologetics, suitable for convincing unbelievers. Such conceptions lead to nothing less than the turning of the message into a *human* truth pronounced by men in the name of their natural judgment. They cause us to forget Him, Who is both the author and the object of this message ; they minimise the creative power of God, and substitute for it our own efforts. These conceptions, moreover, inevitably render our witness relative — relative for ourselves and relative for those for whom we are working it out. We can never create anything *absolute* ; God alone is capable of that. And it is God, the Absolute Himself for Whom men are calling, and not *our* relative conceptions of Him.

There is, moreover, no Federation message for another reason ; simply because we are a Federation, i.e. a group of national movements, differently situated both historically and geographically. Our different historical backgrounds, our different cultures, our confessional traditions, the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves at the moment,

make it inevitable that we should discover special aspects of the Gospel, appropriate for all our human and religious diversities. It is undoubtedly true, that our age tends to standardise all conditions of life and all movements of thought. It is especially true, as has been said with deep insight, that the unity of the modern world is clearly a "unity of suffering"; under the pressure of a common apprehension and suffering we combine against a danger which is threatening our entire civilisation and compromising our future. But united though we be, how widely our qualities of suffering differ! When I heard some of you speak of the spiritual misery of your countries, what a difference I felt between it and the misery which I see in my own land! It is true that "the infinite misery of man without God" is the same in all ages and civilizations, but there are many ways of suffering from God's absence. Do not let us, therefore, try to make a sort of superior definition of the Christian thought and action, which we might impose on the world of students. Just as, in bringing the Gospel to an individual soul, we must present to him, according to his nature, his interests, his personal weaknesses, the truths which concern him most deeply and directly, in the same way the messages of God, all contained and united in the one message which is Jesus Christ, are nevertheless specialised according to the peoples, races and cultures to which they are addressed. The marvellous beauty of the Gospel lies in its being appropriate to every spiritual situation, without losing anything of its intangible unity. Inasmuch as the diversity of the Federation is not to be compromised, it cannot have a *single* message. This does not prevent it from always having the *same* message.

In short, we must give up the idea of a Federation message, if by this is understood the statement of a new doctrine of Christian truth. In this sphere the Church alone has the right and the duty to make such affirmations; and at the present time the Church is deeply conscious of this right, and is speaking to the world through the great œcumenic conferences of Stockholm, Jerusalem and above all, Lausanne. Our own task is different; it is, in face of all the intellectual

and moral temptations which confront students today, to bear clear, aggressive and powerful witness to this truth which we receive. We are not an ecclesiastical Council nor an authority on doctrine.

* * *

What then did we do at Zuylen ? In what way does our Retreat, and the whole great effort which the Federation is now making, deserve the name which we have given it : the Study of the Message ? We accomplished a great deal, and we shall do much more, because at Zuylen we heard the real message of God. We ourselves invented nothing, but much was given to us, and this experience will be repeated at many similar meetings. The gift which we received was the realisation that *the Federation itself is one of God's messages*. Because it exists, because it is living, because it never remains satisfied with what it has, but feels therein the obligation to ask for and to receive still more, because it seeks without respite to be more faithful to its apostolic vocation ; for all these reasons it is a work of the living God, a message from God to those who come in contact with it. When the history of the Federation was traced for us, with its various periods, its emphases, its commands, its enthusiasms and its phases of indifference ; when we remembered the men of prophetic insight whom God has given to our movements since their foundation ; when we realised the deep concern with which God fills the hearts of so many of our members, faced by the wretchedness of the modern world, we felt that in spite of all its weaknesses our Federation was not merely a work of human effort, but that God Himself has clearly and undeniably called it into being. The past and present history of the Federation speaks to us as the most insistent of God's messages.

At Zuylenveld we accomplished a great deal also, because we realised that everyone present, and all those whom we remembered in our prayers, those students who were with us in our enquiries and in our prayers, were all messages of God ; messages of faith, humility and grace. By mutual

help, by what we *were* and not only by what we said, did we not penetrate further into the infinite wealth and boundless love of God ?

* * *

Ought we to stop here ? I do not think so. I really think we discovered together certainties that we could all share in spite of our diversity. How, indeed, can we forget the evidences of deeper and more widely-spread spiritual need than any single one of us had hitherto suspected. We thought, each in our corner of the world, that we were alone in our timid struggle against the confusion of our civilisation. Here we discovered that this unhappiness was not our own peculiar and terrible problem ; we saw it more universally, more deeply, more simply also in its diverse aspects. We understood in a new and tragic way the meaning of that hackneyed expression, "*a lost world*". The realisation of this was in itself a message from God, and a nearer approach to the understanding of Christ.

But, at the same time, did we not all feel that this terrible assertion tempted us simply to let things take their course, and that our apprehension, as we faced this fact of perdition, was in danger of becoming want of faith ? Did we not all feel that we should lose our own souls unless we could believe in the salvation of the world ? Have you ever felt as I did then, with a thrill of joy, the privilege of trust and love, which our insight implies ? Have you not felt more sure of God, when you realised the greatness of men's need of Him, and their search for Him even when they go farthest astray ? Hence God's message to the Federation struck me forcibly as a great call to be *men* in the fullest sense. What joy, what a note of triumphant faith, lies in this newly perceived brotherhood of men ! Our world is undoubtedly terrible, and we no longer harbour any illusions about it nor about ourselves ; but how magnificent and how inspiring it is to live in ! How uplifting it is to love it ! Even in its misery it preserves, by that very quality, the image of the God Who created it. One knows what God is, when one seeks the void left in the hearts of His creatures, when He is not

there. Some people seem to be afraid of this "Pessimism of the West", because they imagine that it implies contempt for mankind, and generates cowardice and quietism. Can we not, all of us, retain our individual convictions about it, and yet feel the respect to which God's *creation* is entitled? How can we forget the phrase in the old narrative: "God saw that it was good"; how can we forget all that joy in His work, which this revelation gives us a glimpse of? I have often thought that the great phrase: "God so loved the world..." did not imply merely this suffering, compassionate love, expressed in the Christian salvation, but also that creative love, of which we get some slight idea from the joy which breaks forth in the great artists. Do not the very words of Jesus, "I do not ask Thee to take them from the world", forbid us to despise the world? No doctrine of the fall nor of original sin is so absolute as to obliterate the gesture of God, which created our universe with all the creatures inhabiting it. God willed the creation of our fellow men and so we cannot ignore the fact that it is His will also that we should respect them. This message will be one of the forms of our love.

But it is undoubtedly still more inspiring to live in this "lost world", of which we were speaking, because it is a *saved* world, the world which belongs to the risen Christ, the world in which Easter always signifies the victory of God? We do not need to gain this victory, but only to proclaim it. How far removed we are here from all the easy optimism of the theories of progress! Ever seeking and rediscovering the traces of the superhuman drama of the Passion and of Easter, we live a life both tragic and triumphant, which must make our whole message vibrant.

Following in the steps of Christ, this suffering and sustaining love wishes us to put ourselves entirely on the same plane as our brothers. We do not speak to them from afar off as if we did not share their condition. We know ourselves to be a prey to the same temptations, the same struggles, as they, and that our victories "sanctify us for them". All that we heard at Zuylen about the misery of the modern

world found an echo in our own hearts. Everyone to whom we speak must feel this, so that he, in his turn, may perceive in our message the echo of the voice of God. When students discover in the Federation message this desire to share their disappointments and their noblest aspirations, when they are certain that we understand the conflict and the hunger of their hearts, they will undoubtedly listen to the good news of which we bear witness.

What can we do for them, in fact, if we do not make them feel, as we ourselves have felt it, the emptiness of their human enquiry, their inevitable disillusion by the idols they worship? It is perhaps a negative task, a cruel one also, for as Pascal says, "It is good to be so tired and weary by our fruitless search for ultimate goodness, that we hold out our arms to the Liberator". Shall we then as a Federation have nothing to preach, except this insufficiency of all human efforts to penetrate the mystery of life and of our destiny? I do not think so; I believe that, in spite of our divergencies and in virtue of the experiences we have had together, we can render a *positive* witness, which shall really appeal to all. I will summarise and emphasise this fact quite simply: in the first place, we can emphatically assert *the wealth* of the Gospel, since it is through our very variety that we have come to understand it better. When I listened to those who affirmed their faith and guessed at the spiritual reflection by which this faith was nourished, I was amazed at what God reveals to those who listen to Him. No change occurred in my own convictions, which I could not see any means of reconciling with the affirmations of others during these days; but thinking of certain students in my own country I rejoiced when I considered that in apprehending the reality of God they had been more successful, according to the judgment of certain people, than I had thought myself. It is thus that the apparently manifold messages of the Federation become for our faith manifold messages from God.

Could we possibly doubt the integrity of God's truth, and could our message confine itself within the relativities of human religion? Certainly not. For our whole fellowship is revealed in Him Who is its object, as He is the intellectual

and spiritual *authority* for each one of us. It is *Jesus Christ* our only hope of salvation, Whose disciples we try to be, Who is the continual bond of unity between us. When we speak of Him, and of Him alone, we are all unanimous, We do not wish to deny Him, nor to explain Him as the word is usually understood ; we only wish to show Him as He is, richer than any of our formulae, more powerful to save than any of our theologies. Those days, when so many ideas, so many traditions, so many apparently irreconcilable elements seemed to divide us, I remembered what Christ said one day to His disciples, when the people wished to forsake Him, " Will ye also go away ? " No, none of us wishes to leave Him, for every one of us He is the one fixed point in our whole life, among all our ambitions. By belonging to Him we are members one with another. Ever since the Federation has existed, its unity has rested on Him. It is He Who is our message, He Who draws us to carry it out, and Who sends us into the world, into our universities, to tell what He is, and to seek in communion together what we should do to be true to Him.

Our words may vary, our search may seem to lead us in contrary directions ; as long as we do not forsake Him, the message of the Federation will be what it ought to be, the Federation itself will constitute an appeal to the faith of students, according to the prayer, " I pray Thee, Father, that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me ".

The Alternative to Christian Theism

NICOL MACNICOL

Irreligion or "anti-religion" is so widely prevalent today that it is being recognised as the most formidable force in the modern world hostile to Christianity. It is spoken of as though it were an organised enemy of which those who adhere to the Christian faith are bound to take account. "Secularism" indeed is not merely to be viewed as an evil spirit issuing from the heart of man; it is something more today than a product of original sin. It can claim to be based upon a reasoned interpretation of the universe and to be an attitude to life that can be accepted, and is being accepted by many, with a good conscience. "The trouble is not", says Lippmann, "that men won't believe, but that they can't believe".

Secularism in the sense of the deliberate amputation of those instincts that have in all ages issued in religion is indeed seldom possible to thoughtful men and women. The Stoic or the Epicurean was not in the past, and seldom is today, simply one who doggedly endures or who eats and drinks and forgets. He still possesses his conception of the nature of things which stands in some relation, whether of acceptance or defiance, with his endurance or his enjoyment. One of the most recent exponents of irreligion even goes the length of claiming that those who agree with him have "their own incommunicable experience which is their final sanction". This is, he says, "the completion in feeling of the work of our intelligence". That is indeed the very differentia of the secularist spirit that is making its conquests at the present time. It claims to have got rid of false hopes and of the illusions which our own desires create and to have replaced them by "a mode of thinking and feeling, too sceptical to be called a faith, but for which men can live and work and fight". Its philosophy may be bare negation, but if the questing spirit possesses an assurance that such is the truth of things so far seen, even there a peace may be attained which may be called religious.

What then is this alternative to the Christian interpretation of things towards which this secularist drift seems to be bearing our generation ? I believe that the alternative that has been most generally accepted by those whose faith in Christianity has been dissolved by what Lippmann calls "the acids of modernity" is some form or other, however vaguely held, of pantheism. The substratum of the view of the universe that rules their lives is pantheistic, monistic. That is to say, it is a view of the universe which empties personal relationships of their values, which places men under the rule of fate, which reduces God and man to a single level of unreality. These consequences may not be evident to us when we survey superficially the feverish life of our time, and yet, on a deeper scrutiny, it will, I think, appear, that they are at work around us and that the only cure lies in a rediscovery in power and in reality of the faith of Christ.

If we would see to what this view of the universe, that is subtly involving the lives of so many in the modern world, is likely to lead the spirit of man, if it retains and strengthens its influence, we should consider the Indian doctrine of Vedanta. We have there a system that has close affinities with the attitude to which it is often claimed that modern science is leading men. The existence of this affinity is at least boldly affirmed by some modern Vedantists. Thus both the scientific humanism of today and the system of Vedanta are ego-centric. Both alike leave no place for a God Who is other than the individual, whether he be named humanity or brahman, in both cases an abstraction. Also the Vedantist and the scientific denier of religion alike submit themselves, willing or unwilling, like Cleanthes, to the yoke of Necessity. They both "come clear of the nets of wrong and right" by denying the validity of such codes. These distinctions belong to the region of *maya*, says the Vedantist. The ethics of this scientific irreligionism "admits nothing as inherently wrong"; there is here "no praise or blame".

These parallels proceed from no accidental or surface likeness between the two systems but from the fact that both are agreed in certain fundamental presuppositions. Thus in a

recent exposition of the teaching of the modern Vedantist, Swami Vivekananda, M. Romain Rolland makes the claim that " his conception of nature was not vastly different from that of natural science ". Vivekananda was indeed aware, as M. Rolland is aware, of the dangers to the spirit of man that accompany such an interpretation of his universe. It has made the East " passive, static, ataxic "; it has cut the nerve of effort, extinguishing hope and purpose. Will it have the same evil influence in the West ? M. Rolland is quite frank as to the perils that accompany this message from the East of which he is an apostle. " The idea of the Atman (the sovereign soul) is such strong wine that weak brains run the risk of being turned by it ". " Since everything is within ourselves and nothing outside, we assume full responsibility for our thoughts and deeds. There is no longer a God or a Destiny on to whom we can basely shift it. No more Jahveh, no more Eumenides, no more ' Ghosts '. Each one of us has to reckon only with himself. Each one is the creator of his own destiny ".¹ This results in a tolerance even of polytheism, " the proliferation of the One ", an acceptance, as Gandhi would accept it, of even animistic religion as good.

We see indeed, writ large in India's history and painted in crude colours, the perils that threaten our civilisation, if this creed or no-creed that lies behind so much of the scientific humanism and pantheism of our day should be generally accepted. If the Vedantic " Thou art that " leaves ample room for polytheism, then similarly *Homo homini deus* permits and may create moral anarchy. So also both in the East and in the West a belief in the bondage of the human will and the discovery of the helplessness of one who has no source of strength outside himself, cannot but in time breed, even in the most robust natures, despair and lethargy. These have been in the East the fruits of this world view. If it is so that the secularism and the outlook of much of the science that we see about us in the West today have a closely similar world-view underlying them, then apathy and despair are likely to be their fruits also.

¹ Prophets of the New India, p. 472.

It would take too long to attempt here to prove that this pantheistic or monistic world view does, as a matter of fact, underlie much of the thought of our time. It could, I believe, be proved to be the creed of many of the poets of yesterday and of today, and the poets often utter the secret thoughts of their contemporaries. Thomas Hardy's pantheism is frankly set forth by him with all its desolating consequences in life, life that he is weary of looking at "with its draggled skirt and its hobbling pace and its outworn pleasantry". W. B. Yeats, perhaps the greatest of living English poets, has a similar outlook on the world and a not dissimilar mood.

And God stands winding His lonely horn ;
And time and the world are ever in flight,
And love is less kind than the gray twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

M. Rolland is convinced that there has been through the XIXth century an infiltration of Hindu thought into the American spirit. He traces this in Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, and there seems no reason why he should have limited his investigation to them and to their period. One would think that there was little enough kinship between American energy and the static East, between the American religion of social activity and the Indian religion of escape, and yet it sometimes seems as if the partitions that divide them are wearing very thin. It may be so, as M. Rolland says, that in Europe and in America we can "listen through the wall to the blows of Asia, the Coming One", but if so we cannot see in her, as he does, the other half of the soul of Europe, but rather her Mara, her temptress, who would deprive her and the whole world of hope and of its promise of final deliverance.

Over against that view of the world stands the Christian Gospel with the conception of the universe which lies behind its message. In antithesis to immanentism with its extrusion of a living God other than ourselves, the Christian holds to a doctrine of divine transcendence with its story of the intervention in time of a divine helper. The truth of a theory of the universe cannot be judged by our estimate of the value of the kind of life on which it results and yet we

must give some weight in our estimate of these two theories to the fact that the one seems to result in lethargy, while the other creates moral energy. Theism, as William James has said, is "the affirmation of an eternal moral order and the letting loose of hope". Two quotations from Dr. Rudolf Otto's recent book on the *Indian Religion of Grace* will illustrate what it is that sets Christianity in strong contrast to a view held alike by Indian Vedanta and the modern "religion of science". "India", he writes, "gives no genuine *worth* to the world, because it knows nothing of a goal of the world". For the Christian "the world, as God's world, has the dignity of an ultimate destiny"¹. Again "the expectation of the advent", (which may be said to be a corollary of transcendence) "in humble reserve and in supplicating expectation, in view of the final breaking forth of the 'wholly other', is the soul of this religion (Christianity) from the days of the original Church on — an attitude of the soul altogether unknown in India"².

The transcendence of God on the one hand, and on the other His coming into the world of time and sin, these are the two poles of the Christian interpretation of life and destiny. We have been too ready, perhaps, in recent years both to limit that transcendence and to think that so long as we are convinced of the divinity of love, its revelation in history is of no consequence. This "immanentism", as Baron von Hügel calls it, must not so rule our thoughts as to deprive us of the supreme moral and spiritual succour that a doctrine of transcendence and of the divine grace provides. Christianity, to quote Baron von Hügel again, teaches "rightful contact with, and renunciation of, the Partial and the Fleeting", and at the same time "ever seeks and finds the Eternal, ever deepening and incarnating within our experience this 'Transcendent Otherness'". To the rediscovery of this centre of power in Christianity, Baron von Hügel was ever summoning his contemporaries, and this appears also to be a central aim of the teaching of Karl Barth. There can be no fellowship, we believe,

¹ Otto, XL *The Indian Religion of Grace*, pp. 73 and 86.

² Do. p. 71.

between Pan and Christ, no syncretistic conflation of Hinduism and Christianity. The strange alliance of which we see some tokens between the ancient thought of India and the world view that is being adopted by some of the scientific teachers of our time is one that exhibits to us some of the characteristics of a formidable antagonist of Christianity with whom she can make no terms. That world view and the Christian view which looks up to the Father, Lord of heaven and earth, are in final opposition to each other.

The Message Paper

D. K. PICKEN

This article is based on a detailed study of Message Paper : No. 1 — on “The Message of the W.S.C.F.”¹ — from the point of view of the systematic work that has been going on in one movement since the war. The writer has found that the results of that work supply answers to every question and sub-question of the scheme in the Message Paper ; and these answers have actually been worked out in detail. The article is an attempt to embody them in a connected and self-contained statement — as a contribution to the general discussion of “The Message” problem. Its content is derived from the work of the Australian Movement ; but its form is determined by the structure of the Message Paper. It is, therefore, not to be regarded as the natural, positive presentation of the Australian S.C.M. contribution — which will be otherwise made available². But it is written so as to be readable (one hopes) by readers of *The Student World* who may not have studied the Message Paper. (If it promotes further study of that exceedingly able and important document, so much the better). *The index numbers attached to quotations are the numbers of the pages*

¹ Published by the W.S.C.F. in 1930.

² Something of this positive presentation was sent to the movements in the October Round Letter

in the Message Paper from which these quotations are taken. (In one or two cases a number covers more than one quotation, from the same page).

The article is written under a deep sense of the urgency of achieving something substantial in this matter of the Message, in this year of critical importance in world history. "The present period in the Federation's history is one in which this duty comes to us with special insistence ; for it would seem that we have arrived at a decisive hour".⁷ This affirmation of the Message Paper applies with peculiar force to 1931.

A Common Message

The Federation, being *Christian*, has "a common message."¹² That message is *Christ* and His Gospel of the Kingdom of God. There is no evidence of disagreement upon this general proposition — disagreement which, if it existed, would be fatal to the continued existence of the Federation. But there is not agreement upon the content of the message, because of the variety of our heritage in a divided Church — the Body of Christ, broken by those who profess to follow Him. (There is truth in every branch of the Church ; but it is all partial and one-eyed truth, which must be re-integrated if there is again to be effective witness to the world. "It is our mission as a federation to be pioneers of unity." ⁸)

The message cannot be conceived as something static. It is a living person — the Living Christ, most vital force in all the universe. It can again be no "*minimum* basis of agreement" — no "least common denominator".¹³ Who can think of *Christ* in such terms ? Our common basis must be the maximum, not the minimum : the highest that we have in common (if, indeed, it should prove that what we have in common can be so described.)

Its relation to the original "Message of the Federation"¹⁴ is important. But that was not so much a message of the Federation, as a call *to* federation — by the founders and the pioneers. It was "closely bound up with the revival

movements of the late nineteenth century " — which were based on one particular school of theology and doctrine. Those movements have done their work, and have had their successes — and their failures. Their message, as they expressed it, is not that which can be made effective today, as the "message to students" which is our "*raison d'être*".⁷ But "the personal appeal to conversion" — the call to "decision" for Christ — must always be the central note, whatever particular forms it may have to take, at different times and in different circumstances. The way of loyalty to our original foundation is to find the right form of this appeal for our own day and generation. Verbal or literal adherence to mere forms of expression can be fundamental disloyalty.

The Starting Point

When we set ourselves to the task of "facing together the truth of the Gospel in order to find a common interpretation of it for our time"¹³ (an admirable expression of the objective in view), the question of "the starting point" is fundamental. It is at this point that the great mistakes of the past have commonly been made.

What the starting point must be seems to become apparent when we think of how the Gospel actually came to men : in the person of "the Jesus of History" — "going about doing good", as a man among men. Cannot we begin at that point by coming to sit at the feet of the Master as we find Him in the synoptic Gospels ? — realising that this is no Master who has been dead for centuries, but is eternally alive and Himself the inspiration of all our seeking. "For us of the Federation there is only one way : namely, to face our common Lord and to ask Him to make us one."⁸

The root of many of our difficulties is that we take for granted just what may not be taken for granted, namely that men *know* the Jesus of the Gospels. The Gospels are familiar to all, perhaps they are too familiar. But the need is for knowledge of Christ Himself, as of One "nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet" — to whom we

can turn for perfect friendship and guidance all along the way of life. This is the knowledge that *is* eternal life.

Part of the difficulty resides in a somewhat arbitrary distinction between " the Jesus of History " and " the Christ of Faith ".¹⁹ This is not a real issue ; for these are complementary aspects of *the Christ*, neither of which has its real significance without the other. Any over-emphasis on either, at the cost of under-emphasizing the other, is untrue to *Christ*. What Jesus called " life " — more specifically " the life of the flesh " or " eternal life " — is essentially not subject to death, which is a characteristic of " the life of the flesh ". If Jesus' own pure life of the spirit did not persist beyond the grave, then *there is no Gospel*. " If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain... ". This is no mere matter of inadequate historic evidence of " resurrection " ; it is implicit in every detail of the Gospel. " The Christ of Faith " is " the Risen Christ ", and is grounded in " the Jesus of History ". That is elementary Christian principle ; but it is of fundamental importance, and its importance must be stressed.

There may be — apparently there are — interpretations of the Gospel which are not rooted in " the Jesus of History " ; but there is no prospect of a *common* interpretation on any other basis. That is so obvious that the point need not be laboured.

The Common Interpretation

The Christ whom we find in the composite record of the Synoptic Gospels — if we get to know *Him*, not merely things which He said and did — " opens to us the scriptures ", while " our hearts burn within us ", as in the story of the Emmaus road. He is the key to the prophetic truth of the whole Bible.

He interprets for us these very records in which we first find Him — in a process of action and reaction between Him and them, to the possibilities of which there are no limits. But it is when we seek in Him for interpretation of the Fourth Gospel that we find the power of this process.

He resolves for us the intrinsic difficulties of this Gospel, which have proved so refractory to scholarship; and it responds by pouring new floods of light upon His person. It is here that we find, with utmost profundity, the content of His mind on the nature and meaning of human life in relation to the Spirit of God.

When we seek to penetrate still more deeply in the effort to discover what "God" actually meant to Jesus — this that filled all His thought and life — He Himself leads us back to the study of Hebrew prophecy in the Old Testament and interprets it to us, resolving difficulties otherwise insurmountable even by the scholar.¹

This same fundamental principle is applicable to the rest of the Bible, namely, to the apostolic literature. It must be sifted — more expressly than has generally been done — in order to separate out what is universal and of permanent value from what was of only local and passing significance. When this is done for us by the interpreting mind of Christ, it rids us of that bondage to the detail of apostolic doctrine which has so hampered the advance of Christianity: a state of affairs quite unjust to the Apostles themselves, who wrote in response to the immediate need of their contemporary civilization — and the very greatness of whose labours has made many of the problems of that civilization irrelevant to us.

The natural starting point thus sets us on the road to the common interpretation of the revelation of God in and through Christ. It is necessary to discuss the nature of this revelation.

The Unique Revelation

The revelation of God, centred in Christ, can in no sense be described as "irrespective of experience". It is bound up with the whole national experience of Israel — an experience uniquely profound in the history of the nations;

¹ For a study of "The Christian Conception of God", from this point of view, see an article by the writer in *The Student Movement* (organ of the British S.C.M.), April 1931.

with the personal experience of the individual prophet, agonising with and for his nation, and wrestling with God ; and with the experience of Jesus Himself, who " increased in wisdom... and in favour with God and man " — who was " in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin " — who " endured the Cross, despising the shame ". Revelation is no mechanical, or " automatic " process, in which men are used in some fashion as speaking-tubes, or even as psychic media. It comes through man, at the height of his manhood — not to the derogation of manhood. And it is bound up, also, with the experience of those who stake their lives in faith upon it and prove its truth for themselves.

Bible and Church have no authority for thinking men except that absolute authority which resides in the truth — i.e. the authority of God Himself. Truth is not true because it is affirmed by some " authority ", but because it stands the tests of truth when one puts one's faith in it and lives by it¹.

Human authorities derive their authority from the truth — which is itself essentially divine — not it from them.

The uniqueness of the Christian revelation is the uniqueness of the supreme. It is quite proper to use the term *revelation* in such phrases as " the indisputable revelations of modern science " — which are revelations of truth (and, therefore, revelations of God), but on a different plane of reality. It is also proper to use it of the prophetic insight of the great poets. But Hebrew prophecy, culminating in Christ, is unique in its *direct* insight into the ultimate reality — which is *God*. Its uniqueness — and the uniqueness of Christ at the heart of it — is absolute to those who have proved its truth in their own lives. But it is no matter for dogmatism. Christ and His Gospel can be trusted to demonstrate their uniqueness to those who face up to them. Dogmatism is a sign of weakness, not of strength, it is evidence not of faith, but of the failure of faith. That should be obvious, but it cannot be left unsaid.

¹ It is not possible to discuss the nature of these tests in the space available for this article, but they are largely matters of common sense.

Christ and the Modern Mind

The peculiar task of the Federation is to proclaim, with conviction, that the revelation of God in and through Christ is utterly adequate to what we call "the modern mind"; that it meets the peculiar need of our time as nothing else can. But it can do this only by facing the plain fact that "Christianity", as commonly understood — in "certain traditional forms of organised Christianity" ¹⁵ — certainly does not meet this need. A "rethinking of Christianity" ¹⁶ — not "total" but thoroughgoing and fearless — in terms of "modern scientific thought" is as necessary for us as such rethinking was for St. Paul, *vis à vis* the Graeco-Roman world of thought. And it is essentially the work of a *student* movement — with all the help always available from the Churches, but independently of mere Church tradition. The result of such a process is not in doubt — if it be pursued in the spirit of complete devotion to Christ — as indeed, the consequences of failure to face the urgency of the task are also not in doubt.

"The modern desire for absolute moral freedom and self-expression" ¹⁶ must be met positively by the affirmation that such freedom and self-realisation are possible only in the life of Christian faith. It is a first principle of the Gospel that man is a spiritual being — in the image of God — with fundamental freedom of will, and consequent moral responsibility. But it is an obvious fact of common sense that human freedom is hedged about by all manner of restrictions and obstacles, which commonly reduce the freedom of the individual to something quite insignificant in relation to the dominant powers of the universe. We are free, but we are also part of creation and subject to its laws. If there is one thing the modern mind has been trained to realise, it is that man's freedom of self-expression depends upon discovery of these laws *and obedience to them*. The man who breaks a natural law is likely to break himself against it like waves against a great sea-wall. The Gospel is here more scientific and more modern than modern science. Its fundamental principle is the universal operation of spiritual

law, which it calls "the Will of God". Its good news is that this law is Love — the Perfect Good Will — and that it can be known at every day and hour of life. Its message of salvation is that in obedience to the Will of God — no mechanical obedience, but obedience of the spirit to laws of the spirit — man finds himself, "his own soul" (or "his true life"). "If ye continue in my word" (hold steadfast in Christian faith), "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". It is in the service of God — and only so — that man finds perfect freedom. The condition of "turning from self to God"¹⁸ is the condition of "bringing the self to its clearest expression"¹⁹. "If any man will come after me, let him deny *self*" — the petty, narrow self — "and take up his cross" (the burden of service to the uttermost) "and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake" (will stake all in the Christian adventure of faith) "shall find it".

As the only adequate definition of sin is disobedience to the laws of the spirit — opposition of the human will to the Will of God — it is an immediate corollary that he who sins becomes a slave, the slave of circumstance (outward, or within his own body). That "the wages of sin is death" is (in principle) the same kind of scientific truth as that certain death awaits the man who steps in front of an express train.

But great harm accrues from crudity in the conceptions of "God" and "the Will of God" identified with "Christianity". A "God" who is *merely* "personal" — in the sense of merely human — is utterly unacceptable to the modern mind¹. It is this kind of "Christian conception of God" (so-called) that is "eliminated"¹⁵, incontinently, by any modern "view of the world"¹⁴. And in that respect the challenge of "secularism"¹⁵ is salutary. A Christian conception of life which is true to Christ has nothing to fear from comparison with any of its present-day rivals. When we recognise clearly, and systematically, that the category of

¹ This question is discussed at some length in the article on "The Christian Conception of God" referred to in a previous footnote.

"person" is *inadequate* to "God" (though an essential factor in the conception of God) we shall not find it difficult to reconcile what are regarded as fundamentally conflicting conceptions of God and "fundamentally different views of life"¹⁸, resulting therefrom. God is "immanent" and "transcendent"¹⁸; Spirit creative of All, in Whom we "live and move and have our being".

Christ and the Social Order

The problem of characteristic present-day loyalties to the "collectivities"¹⁷ — nation, class, humanity — and the general problem of man's relation to human society¹⁹, have their Christian solution in Christ's Gospel of "the Kingdom of God". But this conception again has suffered from undue emphasis of one or other of its two aspects. For one type of Christianity "the Kingdom" has been essentially other-worldly; for another type, essentially this-worldly. Both are untrue to Christ's conception.

The Christian is a citizen of this world — necessarily — but not merely of this world. He is also a "pilgrim of eternity". He is a child of God, whose destiny is eternal life. But the foreground is here and now. The one quite certain fact is that we have to live our lives in this world — whatever else. What we make of this life is our specific task and responsibility. The Christian must live his life *sub specie aeternitatis*; but that does not lessen, it heightens his responsibility for how he lives it. Nothing in life has deeper significance than the concealment from us of its ultimate issues. There is an immediate task upon which it is our function to concentrate.

Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom puts emphasis on both aspects. The "raw material" of the Kingdom is human talent — all the wealth of human gifts with which this world has been endowed by God. And the ideal conception which is to determine all our relations to human society (however imperfectly we may find it realised in that society) is *the cooperative commonwealth of human talent, functioning for the good of all and "for the glory of God"*. How can we

“pray” for the coming of this “Kingdom” if we are not giving our lives to its realisation? How can we “pray” for the doing of God’s Will, on earth as in heaven, if our lives are not consecrated to the doing of that Will — if, in particular His Will for “the Kingdom” (as we find that Will in the mind of Christ) is not also our passionate will?

But “the Kingdom” is no mere matter of human society in this world. The fact of death alone is contrary to its realisation upon earth; death, which interrupts the process in the individual life — which breaks into the relations of human love that best express the spirit of “the Kingdom” — which prevents progressive development in this world. The *dénouement* is beyond this life; Jesus made that perfectly clear in all His teaching. That it is hid from our eyes is a specific condition — and a specific discipline — of our life on earth. But “the outward and visible sign” of Christian life — of which “the inward and spiritual grace” is love of God — is that we shall live in human society as citizens of “the Kingdom”, and view it consistently in the light of that ideal conception.

This means that the Christian life is essentially a life of faith: faith in God, Who is Perfect Love and has at His command all the powers of the universe — faith that we shall “find ourselves” — find freedom and true self-realisation — in service of “the Kingdom” — faith that all true service of “the Kingdom” is gathered into the spiritual structure of the universe. But it is no blind faith. It is, on the contrary, the only adequate practical philosophy of life; the most rational of all outlooks upon life.

It is within this circle of ideas that we must find significance for “the collectivities”; and it is in terms of these ideas that true Christianity “must express itself as to the great social and international issues of our time”.²⁰

A message on these lines will be no empty form of words. In a world of revolutionary thought it will be most revolutionary of all. But the revolution it will proclaim will be beneficent and constructive — to be achieved not by force and domination, but by the power of God operating in lives of faith and through the channels of external circumstance.

Russian Students and Their Church

V. V. ZENKOVSKY

Before the revolution the great majority of the Russian intelligentsia was indifferent, and at times even hostile towards the Orthodox Church. Although the Russian Church had no freedom before the revolution, and thus could not practise the "soborny" administration which is peculiar to it, this subordinate position of the Church did not exculpate, in the eyes of the intelligentsia, the defects that it saw in the Church. To understand this, one must bear in mind the great development of positivism and nihilism in Russian society. This unjust and painful "law-suit" of Russian society with the Church was practically over by the beginning of the XXth century, when new notes began to sound clearly and deeply in the Russian soul, and when the revival of religious thought began. The war and the revolution that followed, the unprecedented and terrible Russian tragedy completed the liberation of the Russian spirit from the spiritual disease in which it lived. The spiritual world of the Russian intelligentsia has entirely changed during the last ten years, and if this cannot be seen in Russia itself, it is merely because there is no free manifestation of inner movements, as all of life is dominated by a system of forced godlessness.

Among the emigration, who enjoyed freedom, the spiritual change manifested itself in full force. Wherever the Russian *émigrés* settled to live, Orthodox Churches were erected, supported entirely by the refugees themselves; religious fellowships and societies were founded, religious literature was published, a theological institute was established which has now been in existence for six years. The Russian Student Christian Movement, founded in 1922, became one of the most powerful instruments of this return to the Orthodox Church. Openly and directly it confessed its loyalty to the Orthodox Church and from its beginning connected all its activities with the clergy. The very first annual conference,

which united all the circles that had hitherto existed separately, and which laid the foundation of the movement as an organisation, manifested the *liturgical* character of its conferences. In the Church services, in fervent prayers, in preparation for Communion, lies the chief emphasis of our conference life, the basic source of inspiration and creative force, an experience that no participant can forget. It is a real holiday, a kind of vision of the fulness of life in Christ, for which every faithful soul is longing. We start the day with liturgy (in a special place used as a Church) we finish the day with evensong and general prayer : we spend a long time in Church ; there we learn to love each other, to feel our unity in Christ. I know that our long Church services fatigue our non-Orthodox friends who wonder at our indefatigableness, but we are accustomed to our long services, we love them and our prayers. Only those who understand our language can appreciate not only the wonderful and incomparable beauty with which our services are filled, but the real, joyful *life* that reveals itself in them. They do not cut us off from life (though profoundly mystical, Orthodoxy is at the same time very sound and realistic), but they teach the joy of prayer, the joy of communion with our Lord Jesus Christ ; they give a vivid and profound sense of the truth and happiness of being with God, of living in eternity. They embed in the soul — without any words and lessons — the reality of mystical life, communicating this experience to the soul as one from which all its creative forces grow. Our Church services are an indispensable means of education in helping the religious life of youth. Not by words and homilies but by becoming sensitive to the living reality of the Holy Spirit in the Church the young soul opens itself for the religious life.

There is nothing artificial or merely exterior in the liturgical character of our conferences — on the contrary it represents the inner source of all the religious vitality with which our conferences are filled. This is what explains the fact that the immediate nearness of our movement to the Church does not proceed from any preconceived ideas, but is, on the contrary, the source of ideas. Thus, the fundament-

al idea of our movement can be defined as the idea of "churchification" of life, the idea of "Church-culture". This idea was for a long time ripening in Russian religious thought and had reached its highest expression in Dostoievsky as well as in the philosophy of Vladimir Solovieff. We must note that through the whole XIXth century there was developing in Russian thought a critical attitude towards secularism, the fatal separation of Christianity and life, which is a deplorable characteristic of Western Europe. The idea of an integral, inherent culture, synthetically embracing all the realms of life and creative art and finding at the same time its basis and its sanctifying power in the Church — has a central place in Russian religious thought of the XIXth and XXth centuries. Only in our movement however, has this idea found its organisational expression. It must be said that for Russian youth the idea of an integral culture is not a purely intellectual idea, but a living imperative the immediate goal towards which they are pressing. Before the crisis in Russian society in its attitude to the Church took place, it was hardly possible to unite youth on the ground of love of the Church. But now, thank God, our youth returns to the Church with such ease and conviction that for it the former *idea* of churchification of life has become a reality, an actual programme of life.

The idea of "churchification" of life means in its substance the return towards theocracy, but theocracy does not at all mean government by clergy alone, as was the case in the middle ages. According to the teaching of the Orthodox Church it is not only the clergy who are active in the Church, but the whole "Church congregation", i.e. clergy and laymen in their organic interrelation. By Church culture, therefore, we do not understand the return to the mediæval régime but rather the activity of the whole Church membership, its creative participation in the sanctification of life. And this means that Church culture is impossible without freedom, since without it no sincere and full effort to attain the ideal of transfiguration of life is possible. It is in the confirmation of the idea of *free Church culture* in the uniting of the idea of "churchification" of life with the

fundamentals of freedom that the main distinction lies between us and the mediæval theocracy. It is necessary to add that by transfiguration of life in the spirit of the Church we do not mean transfiguration in the realm of decrees, laws and orders, but the manifestation of new life in the inner man, transfiguration of personality. Through the heart of man, and not through his conduct, the sanctifying force of the Church permeates life ; the idea of churchification of life means, therefore, not the authority of the Church over life, but sanctification of life by the Church, a purely inner influence of the Church through the process of spiritual rebirth. Orthodoxy is full of humility, but its outlook on human nature is not gloomy, it does not consider that all in man is sin ; it sees in man not only evil, but also forces of good and truth. Man is weak, however, and the Church comes and helps us with her grace.

In order to show clearly what is happening in our movement, it is necessary to say at this stage two words about the Orthodox conception of the Church. According to the Orthodox teaching the Church is a divine-human organism, the body of Christ is "heaven on earth", the constant dwelling of God's grace among us. The Church for us is not an "institution", nor is it merely a social and spiritual milieu ; it is a mystical and at the same time historical *organism*, apart from which personality becomes lonely, powerless and empty. The power of the Holy Spirit constantly abides in the Church, blessing everyone who lives in it. Hence arises the teaching about the magic effect of the grace of God. But the fundamental difference between mystic power and magic is in the fact that in magic there is no room for freedom. There is magic where it is thought that by doing certain actions, by pronouncing certain words supernatural forces must necessarily manifest themselves. But the grace of God, received in Sacraments, flows freely from the love of God for men, and if we believe in the reality of Sacraments, it is because we believe in the Church, in the words of the Saviour that He is always with us and that His Church shall never perish. Participation in Sacraments, therefore, is based entirely on humility and repentance,

on our prayerful appeal to the mercy of God. The theory *ex opere operato* is foreign to Orthodox dogma.

One foreign observer has noticed that the most frequent prayer in our Church is the prayer "O Lord, have mercy upon us". This constant appeal to God, combining humility with freedom (because the soul turns freely to God in its humble consciousness of sin) opens the way to the action of the grace of God abiding in the Church. God is always near us, provided that we sincerely and earnestly seek for Him and turn towards Him.

What does an Orthodox receive from his nearness to the Church? A sense of incessant standing in the presence of the Holy Trinity, of the Holy Virgin, and all the Saints. In this experience lies the key to our religious psychology. We are deeply conscious that we are sinful and that we do not know how to live, but our soul is burning with love for our Lord and it turns completely to Him. This is fundamental and central in our lives, the most creative element in our soul. And when we go to Church we are deeply conscious that in this exterior temple abides the Church of Christ — and thus the Church is for us not merely an "institution". The Church is not a limitation of our freedom, but its development and sanctification, because in the Church our heart becomes purified and the soul acquires wings of inspiration. All this might seem to be a *theory*, an interesting and curious one, but still a theory. But for us it is no theory, it is a living reality. We do not explain to youth all these ideas about the Church; the Church herself enters their hearts, draws them to herself. If this were not so, how could we preserve this deep attachment to the Church?

Perhaps the most vivid expression of this inner turning of our movement to the Church is the fact that three years ago the movement invited a special priest and created its own chapel in Paris. In this S.C.M. Church the liturgy is sung daily, every day prayers are read for the movement, and we all feel that there the main force of the movement is concentrated. The thought, that the chaplain of the movement prays daily for all, gives us a deep sense of our unity

and our nearness to each other. The chaplain of the movement prays for the movement, but he does not govern it, and this better than anything else illustrates the attitude of our movement towards the Church. The movement is a free union of laymen under the spiritual (but not administrative) leadership of priests and hierarchs of the Church. It is governed by its central organ, of which the chaplain of the movement is one of the members. The movement gives full scope to free and creative initiative, it courageously seeks new paths as long as they are in harmony with the religious consciousness of the movement. This is especially true of the participation of the movement in the œcumenic movement of recent years. Without having any formal mandates of the Church (but with its blessing) the movement sincerely and enthusiastically participates in œcumenical work, contributing everything that Orthodoxy gives. It is sufficient to mention the Anglo-Russian conferences (four have so far been held), a Franco-Russian retreat (September 1930) and other conferences.

Being Orthodox our movement gladly welcomes to its ranks persons of other confessions if they find communion with us spiritually fruitful. This living collaboration based not on concealing our nearness to Orthodoxy but on its revelation, has proved so far fruitful and genuine. Faithfulness to Orthodoxy does not mean fanaticism, intolerance or the spirit of exclusivism.

The Russian Movement is devoted to the Orthodox Church not because it wants to use the forces of the Church in a utilitarian way, but because it recognises the truth of the Church. Hence the clearness and precision of the dogmatic attitude in our movement. Personally I support this clear-cut dogmatic position with all my heart. Christianity is not merely morality ; it is a religious transfiguration of man and of peoples through their turning to the Holy Trinity. To guard the religious depth of Christian revelation and to bring it home to youth seems to me to be the chief task of the Federation in our times. It is just this confession of the basic truths of Christian revelation which makes to us, Orthodox, the Federation precious and near.

Reflections on the Message Study in Holland

H. C. WEILAND

Our movement received the Message Paper of the Federation in June 1930. In July Dr. Visser 't Hooft introduced the subject at our annual Leaders' Conference. Since those days the question of message has been studied in a number of groups in all university branches of Holland. In March a conference of members of these groups will meet to draw certain conclusions from the study. The programme of the General Summer Conference for this next summer has been drawn up with definite reference to the message discussions.

The study groups have worked in the following way : — In order to understand the urgency of the problem they have begun to study the general picture of our modern world characterised by the term "secularism". They have, in the next place, studied the changes which have come over the Student Christian Movement itself and given special attention to the type of leadership provided by Dr. Mott in comparison with our present leadership. Finally, they have faced the question whether there was any need for a reconsideration of the aim and basis of our own movement.

The subjects chosen for the General Summer Conference indicate the same approach :

1. The judgment of the present day world upon Christianity.
2. Has Christianity an answer ?
3. Bound to God (are we really bound to God or simply to a projection of our own mental life ? Does it mean something real in our life or is it merely ideology ?)
4. Our message to students today.

These are the facts, but what about the way in which Dutch students have taken up this challenge ? There was certainly a feeling of expectancy and many have rejoiced in the fact that the Federation dares to face the frontal attack in its full force. It was recognised that there is no point in trying to patch up the doomed parts of the edifice and in

acting as if all the other parts were still fairly safe. It was felt that the attack is general and that we are therefore faced with a clear-cut choice. In all realms, political, social, ethical, things have been eradicated. We must discover what, in our Christian heritage, can stand the test of this general disruption. In the Federation itself so much has changed that it is now becoming impossible just to leave things as they are and to live with shibboleths drawn up long ago. Many of us felt it as a relief to be rid of that complacency which is so afraid to admit defeat that it tries to satisfy itself with a few temporal and local satisfactions. And, even if I must explain later that for many the message question has remained a more or less interesting intellectual problem, I must say at this point that there are some to whom this study has given a new realization both of their lacks and of their possessions and a new conviction that God's answer is to be heard through the appalling difficulties of the struggle.

But there are others who have also looked forward to the message study with a sense of expectancy. I refer to those who do not realize so intensely the disruption of the world's life, but who are keenly aware of the lack of vitality in their own spiritual life. Many of these have hoped that the message might bring them something new, something convincing about Jesus Christ and they expect that the Federation will point to Christ with new insistence. Have they been satisfied by the way in which the question has been approached in the Message Paper? I do not think so. According to them the concern for the world-wide problems and the deep interest in the moving tides of spiritual life detract from the great question which is asked of every individual, namely, "what does Christ mean to you personally?" Although I shall have to qualify my statement in a moment I cannot help feeling that there is some truth in this objection. It is true that it is very easy to lose hold of one of the two realities, either the relation to the wide life of the world, or the inner conversation with Christ in the soul. We are all continually erring on the one or the other side. Is this not perhaps the greatest difficulty involved in the

message question as it has been brought to us by the Federation? Christ *and* the world. The togetherness of these two is the real source of struggle and difficulty for many. Here lies the reason why for many the message question is fundamentally incomprehensible.

"Is not the message which the S.C.M. has to bring the Gospel of Christ as given to us in the Bible? And if so is there really much more to say? Either the Gospel is accepted and understood or it is not." Those who speak in these terms are willing to admit that the forms and terms have to be adjusted to each particular epoch, but they fail to see what this means in relation to the tremendous changes in our present situation. They do not realise how much can be done away with and what the central things are which must remain. They do not grasp the meaning of the following sentence in the Message Paper — "A message is always dynamic because it is a spiritual reality. It is always related to a given concrete situation. It does not exist by itself, but only in relation to those to whom it is spoken".

Our country has all the characteristics of a small country, which can permit itself to take the attitude of a spectator without getting involved in the ups and downs of world-wide movements of thought and life. The great war has, of course, left its traces and affected the life of art and literature as well as the personal attitudes of many. Something of the calm certainty of the dignified bourgeois life has been destroyed by the general questioning of all standards. Youth often goes in directions which cause great concern to the older generation. But among students these developments have never taken a very vehement form. This is especially true in the S.C.M. There is some real questioning about social problems, but not very often with anything like the intensity that we find in Germany or France. Most of the students have only a theoretical interest in the question of war and peace. Convinced nationalists or convinced communists do not exist in the Dutch S.C.M. and the social democrat is even today something of a curiosity. And even for those who are really desirous of participating in

the real life of the world today the burning problems become easily a kind of literary enjoyment.

It is natural that the question of message does not find a fruitful soil in such a situation. The approach to the question presupposes a knowledge based on experience of the spiritual struggle going on in our present-day world. This is its basis as expressed in the Message Paper — "There have been centrifugal forces at work among us and we have perhaps allowed them to go too far in endangering our spiritual unity".

There are other youth movements in our country which take their stand very much more in the centre of the currents of life of our time and which react much more sensitively to the stimuli of surrounding countries than the S.C.M. Thus the Socialist Youth Movement, even if it is a non-Christian organization, might have understood this question much better and might have sought much more ardently for an answer.

Is then the faith of Christian students in Holland of such an indestructible kind that it can stand the severe test of the present social crisis and of modern scientific criticism? I do not think so. For many the social crisis has not become a religious problem and few students who are daily applying the results of natural science have become conscious of the relation of these to their faith. As in America many of our natural sciences are largely based on evolutionary theories, but few medical or biological students seem to feel that their faith is threatened from that side. The same is true of students of history and philosophy who are not deeply influenced by the modern idealistic systems of thought. The only explanation is that many conceive their religion as strictly limited to the realm of the individual soul.

This might be a proof of strength just as Christians, on many occasions, have safe-guarded the Word of God against attacks from the outside by keeping it in their hearts. But might it not be weakness? Might it not be fear of losing that little bit of confidence which gives us a certain quiet in life? And might not this quiet be bought at the expense of our fellow men? Might it not be an egotistical desire to hold

on to that which we have found ourselves by shutting out the world at large ?

If that is the case then the walls with which we surround our little sanctuary will not hold, for the pressure of the waves will become so great that we shall be washed away to the sea with all our possessions. Then we shall only be able to cry for help. And in our helplessness the answer of God's fulfilment will come.

A Traffic in Knowledge

W. S. TINDAL

"As one country doth not bear all things that there may be a Commerce, so neither hath God opened or will open all to one that there may be a traffic in knowledge between the servants of God for the planting both of love and humility."

GEORGE HERBERT.

There was a Scottish minister who, in his prayer of intercession, sought the Lord's mercy upon men suffering from the many ills of life, and finally interceded on behalf of those who were "mere individuals". Perhaps the Federation is the answer to his prayer. It took me at any rate, a mere individual or a mere Scotsman, and led me to Denmark, to France, to Holland, to Canterbury in England. When I wandered in Germany I found it there also. I ask what it says to the universities and colleges of the world — this odd, interfering, unofficial affair that enters into old-world colleges and new industrial universities to speak to students if they will listen, and to offer a gift if they will receive it.

Men and women troop into student unions and coffee houses from class rooms, laboratories and clinics. They talk unendingly ; they smoke and drink. Time does not appear to press them unduly. Irregular in habits and impatient with convention, they constitute a community which has

great power to estrange and irritate the older generation, yet also possessing a deep hold upon its affection. Those in authority in Church, state and industry look upon them with hope and misgiving for the universities are the frames for the garden of the world.

Once I sat in a college refectory and watched the life in one of these frames. The students were confident in bearing as though to give out that they knew pretty well what was wrong with the world and that they were the people to set it right. Into their midst came a little man, most insignificant of all, poorly dressed and poor in countenance. He sat down opposite me and I saw a button in his lapel with an inscription upon it : " God is love ". It is a superficial contrast that may often appear between the members of the Federation and the great body of students, for Federation people are not always brilliant intellectually, not always socially gifted, or outstanding in sport. Many seem a bit odd and rather afraid of the apparently clever, self-assured students who swear lustily, love sport, drink and gamble. These clever and athletic men in their turn frequently despise the religious who appear to them as an insignificant body of people who find their pleasure in life in a strangely devious manner. These prayer meetings, Bible circles, that Puritan turning away from drinking, gambling and sex, all suggest a great fear of life. If that is what religion does, then religion is cramp, and no wonder these people remain a small ineffective minority, so men say. Yet if we are of them we know that they make supreme claims, saying that they have received that which must be shared with all men, which to have is life and to refuse or distrust is death. It is not always apparent what this one thing is, but at times it shines forth and we know we have stumbled upon the treasure which, a man finding, he sells all that he has to possess it.

Where some societies are concerned with politics, or with the arts or one of the sciences, we are here concerned with no specialised function of man but with the going forth of a man's very life to commune with others. Life needs work, we need to be fed and clothed and sheltered, but we need also to respond to other people. The message

of the Federation concerns the character of that response. We must love other people but as a matter of fact we find ourselves despising and envying, or depised and envied. We hunger to commune with our neighbour ; instead we prey upon them, dominate them, harden our hearts against them or fear them. People are so different, in nation, race and colour ; they are richer or poorer, cleverer or more stupid, cultured or primitive. Is a living communion possible ? Try for it we must, but the shadow of death comes over us as we try and we cry out in desperate need of life. Some take to drink fiercely and almost religiously to escape into a new spontaneous life of communion where they can speak the truth and be in living communion ; others gamble recklessly and continuously, for perhaps fortune will favour them and the means of life be within their grasp. Others, knowing that of themselves they can do nothing, give themselves utterly to their class, or nation, or Church, and fall to idol worship. But drink can destroy, gambling can destroy, idols destroy. These false religions are a way of death. There is a way of life. Jesus Christ understood the people we so readily despise, those who gambled and drank and were outcast of society. In Him we see supremely a new spirit of life which once believed in and trusted leads us to God and to the hearts of men.

In the midst of our years of study when we seek the mastery of a technique, or a language, when we survey the history that has made us and try to understand the structure and purposes of the great institutions of life, the Federation reminds us of people and their need of direct communion with one another and with God. " What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ". Because of Christ we know that the soul lives in love, and dies when it succumbs to fear, envy and the lust of domination.

Our warrant for the urgency which, as a note of much that we attempt to do, is that if individuals and nations as they come to behold one another's lives do not find a way of life, they find a way of death. If men are not for one another, they are against one another. And our warrant

for the assertion that we have found a way of life which is stronger than the way of death is the fact of the Federation and its continual rebirth amongst men of different race. People lately at war with one another find it possible to forgive one another ; a club for students of all nations, races and religions is founded as a war memorial ; International Student Service is created ; Bantu meets with white African.

I do not know whether we can achieve verbal agreement in speaking of the spirit which makes these acts possible or in setting forth the characteristic affirmations of those who are of the Federation. In the reports of the Federation's life one lights upon discoveries that are common to all countries and the words that tell of them have deep power over our hearts. " Happily Christ was in the hearts of some, and gradually we became aware of His presence... And we parted like brothers." " A small part of the Kingdom to come has been near to us, has become a living part of our poor humanity."

God is our Father and we can trust Him. He is love, and we can love Him and one another and know that we can never set final limits to its power. I see people in the Federation who manifest that love when surrounded by people whose point of view they dislike and whose mode of life offends. When I see it I know it to be the greatest reality in the world — the way of life. I see also many, and sometimes the same people, who when they meet with men and women of other nations are contemptuous or fearful, resort to bluff and allow envy to master them. It is the way of death.

In a student world where men and women are so tempted to trust in knowledge *about* life and *about* the universe, the Federation tries to speak of life itself — a traffic in knowledge which is the communion of persons. There is much that appears alien and menacing to that life, but there has been shown unto us, and in some degree we share, a spirit of life that makes possible the communion of those who knew not community. We know now that no matter how diverse we are, we can be one. And being thus made one in twos and threes, nothing is impossible in the strife between life and death to those who believe in God.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

An Open Letter to the World's Student Christian Federation from Lord Cecil

Few statesmen have ever done more persistent and indefatigable work for the cause of Disarmament than Lord Robert Cecil. With his great faith in public opinion as a force to ensure progress in international organisation he has again and again become a champion for courageous action in this most difficult of all realms of international politics. He is one of the few who combine the knowledge and experience of the practical politician with the vision and faith of the spiritual leader.

We are therefore extremely fortunate to have him present to us the challenge of the present situation with regard to armaments.

Lord Cecil writes :

Dear Mr. 't Hooft,

The World's Student Christian Federation is, I know, devoted to the cause of establishing peace among the nations based upon Christian principles ; and nothing has encouraged me more than the sympathy with which you received my suggestion that your great organisation might devote special attention during the current year to preparing the success of the first World Disarmament Conference.

It is not, surely, an exaggeration to say that that Conference dominates the horizon of international life today. From being a subject of academic interest, disarmament has become at once the most topical and the most urgent of all international issues. I believe that nothing has sapped the faith of ordinary men and women in the League of Nations so much as the knowledge that Member States of the League continue to prepare for war with one another, and that their Governments have shown such reluctance to give effect to the solemn promises contained in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League, namely, that they will join in a general reduction of armaments to the lowest reasonable limit. Not only is the case for the reduction of armaments based upon this general obligation of the Covenant, but on the fact that a perfectly definite understanding was given to the Germans by the Allies at the Peace Conference that the drastic reduction of German armaments would only be the beginning of a general and all-round scheme of disarmament. Hence there is the danger of a serious moral obligation being broken owing

to the long-drawn delay in effecting reduction on the side of the Allied Powers. This, as is well known, has given a great deal of impetus to political forces in Germany and other disarmed countries who are demanding the right to increase their armaments so as to recover from the humiliating position of inequality into which they believe their countries have been tricked. The political manoeuvres to which these forces and the opposing influences give rise threaten once more to divide Europe into two rival camps, and to revive the old competition in armaments in its worst form, unless some real success can be achieved at the first World Disarmament Conference which is to meet at Geneva in February, 1932.

There can be no success for this Conference which does not involve substantial reductions. The Student Christian Movement would render a valuable service to peace were all its branches and groups in which serious study can be pursued to examine how best the Governments can be induced to accept real reductions at the Geneva Conference. There are, as you know from studying the Draft Disarmament Convention, a number of ways in which armaments might be directly reduced and limited. Many of these methods of reduction and limitation require a good deal of technical knowledge if they are to be properly understood. But there is one form of reduction which every intelligent citizen and Christian can understand, and that is to put some check upon the use of public resources for military purposes. I believe it to be possible and desirable to arrive at an all-round reduction in the total sums provided in national budgets for military purposes by 25 %. This means taking £200,000,000 sterling off the armaments bill of the world. It would be a good beginning. This reduction would not, of course, be applied to Germany, Austria, Hungary or Bulgaria. But provided the same principles of limitation could be agreed upon for all the powers, it is to be hoped that these four nations would also accept the general system of budgetary limitation. Here, I believe, is a practical object to be attained and one which represents the degree of success which can reasonably be anticipated from the Disarmament Conference.

Those of us who believe in the vital importance of saving the Conference from failure must unite our efforts and must work hard. I very much hope that the World's Student Christian Federation and its constituent organisations will find themselves able to devote their efforts to promote the policy which I have outlined.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) CECIL.

Arms and the Nations

Lord Cecil's letter makes it obvious that there is no more important concrete issue in the field of international relations today than the one of Disarmament. Student Christian movements which are alive to their responsibility will want to make a careful study of the question with a view to sharing in the preparation of public opinion for effective pressure upon the governments. Before long it will be too late for action of any kind. In the next few months governments will feel the pulse of national opinion and decide what attitude they will take at Geneva in February 1932.

The following is a concise statement of the present position provided by the League of Nations Union :

The Situation Today

1931 will be a critical year for the League of Nations. It will depend upon the movements of public opinion during that year whether the first World Disarmament Conference is to be a farce or a reality. Unless that Conference results in a treaty which will curb competition in all forms of armaments, subject them to genuine limitation, and bring about such large reductions as were clearly intended by Article VIII of the Covenant and anticipated by the defeated Powers at Versailles from the promises made to them by the Allies, the whole building of international peace will be shaken to its foundations. The first duty of those who realise this truth is to grasp the facts of the present situation. They are these. A Preparatory Commission has, after many difficulties and delays, completed a Draft Convention for the General Limitation of Armaments, which is to go before the full Conference. It was not the duty of the Commission — and here many criticisms of it fell wide of the mark — to fix figures for the armaments of the different countries. What it has done is to propose *the ways in which armaments can be limited and reduced*.

What will become of the Draft Disarmament Convention ?

The draft Convention provides :

The Armies. That the armies are to be restricted through limiting the total number of men serving with the colours, both conscript and professional, and

That there shall be limits fixed for the period of military service in those countries which decide to retain the conscription system, and that the amount spent on military armaments shall be limited.

The Navies. That the number and size of ships and the size of their guns, the number of officers and men, and the amount of money allocated in the national budgets for naval armaments are to be subject to limitation.

The Air Forces. That the personnel, the number of aeroplanes and their horse-power are to be limited.

The Cost of Armaments. That there is to be a limitation of the total amount provided in the National Budgets for army, navy, and air forces.

Carrying out the Treaty. That a Permanent Disarmament Commission is to be set up which — like the Mandates Commission in its own sphere — will watch over the loyal execution of the disarmament treaty and sanction, with proper safeguards, any temporary increase of national armaments to meet grave emergencies.

This draft treaty is not perfect ; but it can be the basis of an effective Disarmament Treaty. It is essential that in the intervening period between now and the opening of the World Conference public opinion should be aroused, informed and convinced of the need of all-round reduction, so that it will require the Governments to propose the *lowest possible figures* for insertion into the Treaty at that Conference.

The Choice before the World

All depends upon those figures. They may show an all-round reduction of armaments down to the level which Germany and her Allies were forced to accept in 1919. Or they may represent no appreciable change from the present time when the world is spending some £800,000,000 a year (£2,000,000 a day) on armaments. Between those two extremes there are all sorts of possibilities. If the limiting figures fixed by the Disarmament Conference represent a substantial reduction, even though they do not reach the lower level imposed by the Peace Treaties, the crisis will be safely passed. The danger of a new race in armaments will be avoided, and the League will be freed from the reproach that, despite its useful work in the economic and humanitarian field, it has failed in the first and greatest task for which it was created.

Students and Workers

On the invitation of the German Student Christian Movement, at the beginning of October 1930 a group of young German students (34 in number, the majority being theologians) met in the "Free Youth" house of the Berlin City Mission. Here a ten days' conference was held, to make a detailed study of the problems of the working-classes, their environment, and their attitude of mind. The aim of the conference was to study and enter into the life of the worker in its various aspects, in order, as Christians, to try and bridge the great gulf between workers and students. It must be realised that workers and students have a common task — that of cooperating in the rebuilding of society, threatened as it is by mechanisation and industrialisation. The problems arising out of the technical age in which we live do not affect one layer of society only, but everybody; it is not only the workers who suffer under the economic crisis of our time but also the students.

This study conference was instigated by Dr. Conrad Hoffmann of the World's Student Christian Federation, who had himself collaborated in the preparatory committee, consisting of representatives of the German Student Christian Movement and some young socialist workers.

The programme dealt with three great problems :

1. *The life of the worker.* The worker at work, his private life, the unemployed worker.
2. *Social politics.* Social insurance, labour laws, workers' self-help by means of trade unions, cooperative societies and political parties.
3. *Workers, culture and religion.*

Twenty lecturers were invited, among whom were ten socialists of no particular religious persuasion, two employers, two professors, three religious socialists and one representative of Christian trade unions. The leadership of the conference was in the hands of Pastor D. G. Dehn, who twenty years ago was one of the first to live among the workers in order to make their problems his own. The programme was so full and so crowded, that it meant hard work for the participants. Altogether there were twenty lectures, followed by discussions. Besides this, visits of inspection were paid to the following : a large manufacturing concern, a finishing factory, a great electric-power station, a large store, workmen's dwellings, two

labour bureaux, the central factory of the Berlin cooperative store, a technical school, and the museum of safeguards against accidents in industry. The evenings were usually free, but various groups were visited and lectures attended. One evening the participants accepted the invitation of a circle of young socialist workers and young members of trade unions. This evening was specially impressive, owing to a speaking-choir, which recited selections from modern poetry by labourers. One of the participants writes : " The young people there brought home to our hearts with fascinating conviction what is the goal of their desires and struggles and how inextricably their lot is bound up with the labour system and the whole economic world. ' The whole system is so senseless : the man who would like to work chafes against his enforced leisure, while the worker gets no rest until he completely goes to pieces ' ". On the last evening Pastor Hanns Lilje presented three critical problems to the participants. " Is the world of socialism really shattered by the great spiritual crisis through which we are passing ? Does this crisis affect only the so-called middle-classes, or is it not rather the fate of our whole epoch ? The age of *individualism* is drawing to a close ; but is there really such a person as the collective member of society, so much talked of in socialist circles, that we can speak of him with so much assurance ? " " And the *national* side of the question ; for national and bourgeois are two different conceptions, and the riddle is not solved by putting them on a par ". " And finally, what has happened on the *religious* side ? No member of the proletariat can be blamed, if Christianity gives him the impression of a middle-class affair ; it is the fault of the middle-classes themselves. Nevertheless the proletarian point of view is a false one. It runs counter to reality, if middle-class and Christian are considered as one and the same thing. The weak point in German socialism seems to me to be, that to it the accepting of socialism means the rejecting of Christianity ".

And the result of the conference ? Certainly only a small beginning, a coming to life of questions and problems, of which hitherto the student had been only theoretically conscious. " These ten days in Berlin were a unique experience ", writes one of the participants ; " for ten days the labour world seethed around us. All the presuppositions of our present social order were questioned. It was a long time before I found a firm foothold again in this turmoil. Many prejudices, many ' bourgeois ' points of view, had to go, and have gone. We learned to take the worker in his environment with perfect seriousness, to be open to his point of view. It was not that we had found a ready-made solution for the social problem, it was

not that we had been chosen to save the proletariat. As Christian people we wanted to see the naked truth as it really is, in a perfectly unbiassed way...." "And because things had been brought home to us so closely that the very roots of our own security, our interpretations and assurances, were forcibly shaken, it is now our privilege and our duty to carry what we had seen as a burning question to the German Student Christian Movement. It is not we who put this question to you, but reality itself. Many of us understood, what it means today to obey the will of God : to see our time in such a way, that the word " obedient " receives a concrete significance : to realise our responsibility for action, and for fulfilling the will of God ".

A "Dynamic" View of Church Unity

If you would permit we should like to print a number of the addresses given at the recent Canterbury Conference for European Theological Students. The programme was rich and varied. There were valuable expositions of the conceptions of the Church held by the various confessions. There were also important papers on the authority of the Church in doctrine, in moral life and in sacraments and liturgy. But one of the papers which led to the most interesting discussions was certainly the one of which we give the following summary. It was contributed by Nicolas Zernoff, until recently secretary of the Russian S.C.M., now a student in Oxford :

"The modern oecumenical movements have two tasks before them : (1) the presentation of the necessity of the reunion of the Churches, and (2) the definition of the principles which may serve as a basis for sound and solid unity. There are many reasons why Christian unity is a real problem today : the needs of the mission fields and the advance of secularism, which appears in its most dangerous form in Russia.

There is, however, a Russian proverb, which says : " Fear is a bad adviser ". Fear will not carry us far. We must go deeper into the problem and discover the roots of the Church's failure to remain one.

Christianity appeared in history as the most dynamic movement that humanity ever knew. It brought with it a new vision and a new enthusiasm. But as time went on a static conception of the Church became prevalent. The dynamic conception was not done away with, but it was subordinated to the static. It was now believed that the Church was founded in a definite form by Christ. This static conception had great vitality, and gave much to the world.

But when little matters, such as days of fasting, etc., were interpreted as the direct divine ordinances, divisions became inevitable.

The static conception of the Church inspired the Reformation of the XVIth century and was not challenged until the XIXth century. Liberal Protestantism of the XIXth century revolted against it, and tried to prove that the Church was not instituted in a definite form by Christ. Church history began to be studied. But the Liberal Protestants went to the other extreme. With the static conception the free man had no place in the life of the Church ; with the liberal conception the same happened to a living and loving God. Church history was described in purely human terms.

At present the old dynamic conception of the Church is reappearing in various Christian circles. It has a strong belief in the living God, and in God's action in history ; but it recognises also the freedom of man and his consequent responsibilities.

On the basis of this position we can solve our two problems, the need for unity and the basis of unity. Only the dynamic conception shows us the real reason for reunion. Under the static conception the Church cannot be divided, for if only one part of Christendom is the true Church of God, all the others are simply conventicles of heretics and schismatics. On the other hand, from the liberal point of view Christian divisions are nothing but inevitable varieties, similar to those of human society. From the dynamic conception they are the most tragic event of Christian history, a direct transgression of the new covenant between God and mankind.

If we believe that humanity has a definite task, then the vision of its harmonious unity is the most glorious ideal that was revealed to us by the mind of Christ. This unity of humanity can only be accomplished in one Holy and Catholic Church. Only in the Church do we see the beautiful conception of all mankind brought into unity and fellowship. This vision of unity will give us a true view of God.

The division of Christendom is a hindrance to our union with God. How can we recognise God as the Father of all mankind when we are living in division and hatred ? The difficulty of recognising God as a loving and living Father is due to our divisions.

At present every Christian body possesses some real and valuable beauty, but it is condemned to be sectarian, for it is blind to the truth of others and is incapable of giving to its members a full Christian vision of God and man.

Pessimism about the possibility of reunion is quite natural and justified under the static conception of the Church, for no one Christian body will ever absorb all the others and get them to admit that they were mistaken. And the liberal point of view is equally ineffective.

What then is the dynamic conception of unity ?

Our starting point is that it must be a very real visible unity. But it cannot be uniformity. Every nation has some particular gifts ; the Church must, therefore, contain very varied expressions of the truth.

Let us examine our present divisions in the light of this dynamic conception. The points of division may be arranged thus in four groups :

1. Differences which are not only legitimate, but welcome.
2. Differences which are not so welcome, but inevitable.
3. Differences which must be overcome, but can only be overcome by gradual spiritual growth of the whole of Christendom.
4. Differences which cannot be tolerated in Church life.

(1) This group includes, first of all, differences of worship. The more differences we have, the richer will be the Church's life. No one form of worship can be enough for all humanity.

(2) Doctrinal points which are very essential to our spiritual needs, but which were not defined by revelation, e.g. the state of the soul after death ; the limits of human freedom ; the relation of the Church to the State, etc. Here Christians must be free ; no uniformity is possible.

(3) Such questions as veneration of the Holy Virgin and the saints, creeds, sacraments, papacy, etc. Differences in these points of doctrine are the most difficult of solution, for they appear as extremely vital to some Christians and as unimportant for others.

(4) Questions concerning the foundations of Christianity, such as the Incarnation and the Trinity. Here the Church cannot have differences ; these are essentials which the Church has to defend and proclaim to all believers. But on these essential points the Christian world is much less divided than is usually supposed, and for instance at the Lausanne Conference the Nicene Creed was accepted by the great majority of its members.

Let me now analyse one point which comes in the third group, viz. *papacy*. There are many people who cannot conceive of salvation without it. To them it is of divine origin, and they cannot accept any compromise. Many of us, on the other hand, believe that it is the most tragic error man ever committed. Is it possible to find any solution to this conflict ? I believe that the dynamic conception gives us a new approach to the question. There are three rules which it is useful to keep in mind :

a. We must be less sure about the limits of God's power, wisdom and love.

b. We must remember Christ's words: "Let it be unto thee according to thy faith".

c. The difference lies as a rule not so much in the facts themselves, as in their interpretation.

d. We say that papal infallibility is not what God wills. But we do not know what God can and cannot do. Our limited conception of God is not adequate to all His power and wisdom.

e. On reading this verse we begin to understand that if millions of Christians have implored God to save them by the infallible Pope, God may have answered them according to their faith, even if it was not the most perfect approach to salvation. Papacy in history is a wonderful and miraculous thing. There are signs that God used it for His purposes. But if we have no right to say that man cannot be saved through papacy, Roman Catholics have no right to say that man can only be saved through papacy.

f. Present papacy is nothing more than one of the possible interpretations of the fact that the Church has a task to preach and preserve Christian revelation. The task itself is admitted by everybody, but we differ in its interpretation. This most difficult conflict can be solved if we all accept papacy as one of the legitimate manifestations of the life of the Church. Only a reunited Church will be able to give an adequate explanation of it. For the acceptance of such a statement is required as an act of love and humility from papist and non-papist Christians. We shall see truth not by arguing and struggling with each other, but by cooperating in the spirit of brotherhood.

The reunited Church must at the beginning include Christians who hold different points of view on the problems enumerated in the third group, but with a clear understanding that they must be solved by the common consent of the reunited Church.

What we are asking for is not indifference to truth, but great humility in recognising that we do not know all the ways of God. A way that is good and right for us, may not be so for another. This attitude will increase our knowledge of God and man.

Another objection often raised is that unity without uniformity will bring constant polemic. But polemic in the spirit of love does not harm. Lack of polemic may show lack of the love of truth.

It is also objected that the fact that there is no uniformity will be a stumbling block to many simple-minded people. But we are beginning to see that the power of truth and not the power of tradition must be the living basis for Church membership. We have to educate Christians to the view that truth is wider than it was once supposed to be.

But how can we decide what principles are to be fundamental ? Here we must trust the living power in the Church itself. We have a real unity in the deepest things ; and this common life in the spirit of love will increase the points of agreement every year.

The difficulty of unity does not lie in the sphere of intellect so much as in the sphere of feeling and will. We have, first of all, to repent, and admit that we have sinned in our sectarianism and narrowness. We must recognise truth in all its power, and give all that we have of mind and heart and will to this great question. It is not enough to say that God will bring union in His own time. We are responsible for the divisions ; it is for us to restore union. God will help us.

At present the œcumenical movement stands at the cross-roads. It can compromise between the liberal and static points of view. This will lead to absolute failure. But if it will accept the new challenge to represent to Christendom the new dynamic conception, it may succeed.

A restoration of the right psychology is the first necessity. We must get the *spirit* of unity. We need to be possessed by faith in the Church ; by hope for God's help, and love for suffering humanity. If we do this God will send His Holy Spirit to help us in the movement for unity.

We need to realise the vision of the loving Fatherhood of God and of the brotherhood of mankind, and to find a practical application of them in our Church life.

Student Christian Movements and the Race-Problem

There are many aspects of the application of Christian principles to actual life about which we can theorize. There are also a few which demand immediate and concrete action. Wherever different races live together, the race problem belongs to the last category. It cannot be avoided. It demands choice. It brings students face to face with reality.

In South Africa and in the U.S.A. recent conferences in which two races have been represented have shown how difficult it is to steer a straight course in this matter. In both cases the student movement has been severely criticised for its attitude. In both cases it has replied by a clear explanation of its attitude. In order to help our readers to understand and sympathise with the problems of these movements, we print the statements which both of them have recently issued. It should be borne in mind, however, that the racial situations in the two countries are in many ways different from each

other and that superficial comparisons are therefore likely to be misleading.

The South African Movement has held a Council meeting and has accepted the following resolution about the Fort Hare Conference of July 1930 (see *The Student World* October 1930) :

1. " We desire as a Council to thank God for what the Fort Hare Conference has attempted and achieved in the bringing of White and Black together for the discussion of the great racial issues with which we are confronted ; and we desire also to congratulate the Bantu Section on its initiative and enterprise in making the conference possible.

2. " With regard to the criticisms which have been levelled against certain happenings at the conference, the Council associates itself with the explanatory statement already issued by the Executive Committee of the S.C.A. It readily recognises the fact of existing racial differences, — as evidence of which recognition it would point to the existence in the S.C.A. organisation of two sections, European and Bantu. This fact and its implications are also fully acknowledged by the Bantu students themselves, as witnessed by the following statement voluntarily made by the members of the S.C.A. Branch at Fort Hare :

‘ Whereas it has come within our knowledge that certain people entertain some fear regarding our aims and aspirations with respect to social relationship between Black and White in South Africa, we, the Executive and members of the South African Native College Students’ Christian Association, wish to state that although we shall always expect and work for social justice for all, and shall appreciate any helpful offer or invitation from the White section of the community, we do not wish to press for any intimate social intercourse between the two races ’.

3. " The meeting of Bantu and European at the same tables and in athletic competition was unpremeditated and no part of the original programme. Strong exception has been taken to this intermingling of the races, and we recognise that deference is due to the feelings of a large portion of the South African people. From this point of view we regret that what has happened has given rise to misunderstanding and estrangement. The Council urges all concerned to have considerate regard on all occasions for the country’s feeling in the matter of social intermingling.

4. " Realising that the harmonious cooperation of the races, White, Coloured and Black, is the most vital of all South African

problems, the Council is fully alive to the unique opportunity which confronts the S.C.A. for promoting the cause of better racial relationships and the fuller contribution of all sections to the highest welfare of the whole community. It is its steadfast aim to bring the students of all races into closer contact with each other, believing that in such a manner alone can we overcome that misunderstanding and prejudice which are retarding the realisation of God's Kingdom in South Africa and hampering the true progress of our people. We are not unprepared for misunderstanding and consequent obloquy, but we desire sincerely to discover and follow what we believe to be the Christian way of life in this question, and we do not believe that this will lead to general, continual and intimate social intercourse. We recognise that we have not yet attained nor can yet attain to an ideal relationship which will satisfy the demands of the Christian gospel, but a nation can only live and move onward by its principles and its ideals, and the S.C.A. stands firmly by the great truth proclaimed in the New Testament that in Christ 'there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman ; but Christ is all and in all' . "

The Executive Committee of the National Student Faculty Conference at Detroit has issued the following statement :

" A conference of nearly 800 persons gathered at Detroit. The fact that the attendance was half student and half adult and that campus situations in many types of institutions provided the material for its work made this a significant gathering.

" The interracial situation which developed at the conference deserves a word of special comment. When the Council of Christian Associations appointed a committee charged with the responsibility of planning for and carrying through a Student Faculty Conference to which representatives of all institutions of higher learning were invited, it was taken for granted that the conference would be planned on an interracial basis in accordance with the practice of the Christian associations and the fact of their membership which is both coloured and white. It was necessary to find a place in which delegations from any and every institution of higher learning could meet together ; this consideration was always in the foreground. The committee made a canvass of a large number of cities and colleges before deciding to locate the conference in the Book-Cadillac Hotel at Detroit.

" During extended conferences with the management of the hotel definite assurance was given of the management's attitude toward such an interracial conference. At that time it was expected that the delegates would number at least 1,200. The arrangement

agreed to by the management was fully stated in a letter from the executive secretary of the conference : First, that all the dining facilities of the hotel, with the exception of one formal dining-room, which was to be reserved for resident guests, were to be available on equal terms to all delegates. Second, that in the assignment of rooms white and non-white delegates were to be treated exactly alike and specifically that Negro delegates were not to be housed upon one floor nor at one end of any floor. Third, that twenty-four hours before the convening of the conference the management was to inform its employed staff of the conditions under which the conference was coming to the Book-Cadillac. In response to this letter the representative of the hotel accepted these conditions. This statement was regarded as sufficient assurance that entertainment could be offered with uniform comfort to all delegates.

" When the conference convened on Saturday, December 27, several incidents occurred that constituted a definite change in the arrangements which the conference management had entered into with the hotel. Negro delegates were refused admission to the coffee shop ; others were asked to change from the rooms to which they had been assigned and a number were placed together in a corridor of one floor. When the Executive Committee called the attention of the resident management to these instances, delegates were re-assigned to rooms satisfactory to them, and the coffee shop, but not the restaurant, was opened to Negro delegates.

" During Sunday, consultations were held by the Executive Committee with members of the Negro group, and certain other advisors in the conference and in the city of Detroit, and consequently the management was urged to re-open the restaurant. Meanwhile some members of the conference were urging that this matter could be adjusted with the hotel management and that such adjustment should be effected without delay. Still others urged that unless the hotel management would consent to adhere completely to the original agreements, no settlement, short of withdrawal from the hotel, would be adequate. During the session of the conference, Sunday evening, the chairman made a statement regarding the difficulty that had developed and communications with the hotel management that were being carried forward and promised that if matters were not adjusted a fuller statement would be made to the whole conference not later than Monday afternoon. The final reply of the management was made Monday morning that on account of the pressure being brought to bear by guests and patrons, the hotel was compelled to bar Negroes from the coffee shop as well as from the restaurant, but that they were ready to enlarge the dining-

room arranged for the conference and to provide meals at coffee shop prices. In conveying this decision the management called attention to the fact that the original agreement had contemplated an attendance of 1,200 or more while the actual attendance of the conference residing at the hotel was less than 800.

"The Executive Committee recognised that this decision made it impossible to carry the conference forward on its original plan and therefore, on Monday morning, December 29, the situation was presented to the conference and later in the day there was full opportunity for questions and for discussion in groups under the leadership of President Wilkins of Oberlin College, President Soper of Ohio Wesleyan University, Thornton Merriam of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, Professor Harrison Elliott of Union Theological Seminary. The Executive Committee and the chairman of the groups then united in a recommendation that the conference should continue in the hotel, making use only of those services that were equally available to all delegates ; that a strongly worded protest should be presented to the management, stating the attitude of the Student Christian Movement on racial matters and calling attention to the dangers and embarrassment to which the movement was being put by the hotel management ; that a statement of these facts should be sent to the president of every institution which had been invited to attend the conference.

"After discussion of this proposal the conference appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of moving the conference to some other location in Detroit. Through this committee it was discovered that the majority of the delegates could be housed in another hotel and the sessions held in the city Y.W.C.A. On Tuesday morning, after discussion of the two possible alternatives, the conference voted by a large majority to continue in the Book-Cadillac on the conditions proposed by the Executive Committee, amended by a proposal that a commission to forward the work of the Christian associations in the field of race relations should be developed.

"Following this decision the conference proceeded with its programme. The Negro delegates considered their position and a number of Negro delegates and some white delegates gave up their rooms in the hotel and left the conference. In addition some white delegates gave up their rooms in the hotel but came back into the hotel for the purpose of attending public sessions and group discussions. A statement representing the opinion of the minority group and signed by seventy-two delegates was presented to the conference.

'We ... believe that a grave mistake was made in not registering a more vigorous protest against the discrimination exercised

against the Negro delegates by the hotel. While there were extenuating circumstances in the situation, we believe that nothing less than adjournment from the hotel would have been adequate.

'We are convinced that protest by responsible groups against racial discrimination in such specific cases is of inestimable value in developing just standards on the part of public and business institutions in the treatment of all races. Our failure in the past has been that of committing ourselves to general principles while at the same time compromising in specific situations.

'We feel this the more keenly because this conference of student and faculty leaders is meeting under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement, which is committed to struggle against racial discrimination in all forms. We believe that equivocal action in such a strategic gathering is a peril to the morale of all who are dealing with the problem on the campuses, and represents a setback to the movement towards racial equality.'

"In accordance with its vote the conference heard the report from a Provisional Commission under the chairmanship of President Mendenhall of Friends' University, on plans for interracial education.

"The Committee of the Council of Christian Associations, who worked with faculty and students in planning the conference, regard this experience as truly distressing. They are mindful of the economic elements which become powerful factors in such a situation; they realise the background of varied public opinion in America, of which the public in Detroit is a cross-section. It is recognized that each delegate goes back to campus or community situations which are comparable to this one in their challenge, in their complexity of factors, and in the difficulties which sincere and earnest people face in attempting to come to united judgment. The committee feels that this specific situation furnished educational material in line with the purposes of the conference. We rejoice that the delegates, both negative and affirmative voters, cooperated so heartily in exploring the social dilemma presented by this experience. In looking forward to future conferences, the committee believes that the learnings of this one are specific and numerous at the point of knowing better how to prepare for interracial conference participation. We believe that such social experiments are valuable, and that the Student Christian Associations with the cooperation of faculty and students, must move forward with the interracial aspects of their work, in spite of difficulties and discouragements."

Religion and Irreligion in China

Of all the religions in China, Christianity is certainly the most aggressive. The evangelistic efforts on the part of the Christian Churches have produced a threefold by-product : first, the revival of interest in the old religions of China, second, a new academic interest on the part of Chinese thinkers in discovering the nature and function of religion, and lastly, the birth of the anti-religious movement. Under the first heading one may mention the Neo-Confucian Society, and its repeated attempts at making the teachings of Confucius the basis of national education ; the new Buddhist youth with its various publications and its reformed methods of preaching and institutional work is another illustration. The growth of the eclectic religious movements, some of which actually tried to combine Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Christianity, is another instance. The discussion on the nature and function of religion was promoted by the " Young China Association " during the closing years of the great war, and well-known scholars, both foreign (including Bertrand Russell) and Chinese, took a very active part in it. The " Young China Association ", which now no longer exists, was in many ways the forerunner of many contemporary movements and schools of thought. It had as its objective the creation of a new China by means of science and scientific method. Soon after its formation the members of the Association differed from one another in their interpretation of its purpose, and today we find former members of the Association taking leading parts in both nationalistic and communistic movements.

The General Committee Meeting of the World's Student Christian Federation in 1922 at Peking was the immediate occasion for the birth of the anti-religious movement. This movement has passed through several stages, and is a force that must be reckoned with. Roughly speaking there are three points of view represented ; the rationalistic, the nationalistic and the communistic. The same person may hold one or two of these views, but, at least in theory, they are fairly distinct from one another. The rationalists regard religion as something which has outgrown its usefulness. They maintain that in a scientific age religion has no part to play. (This view may be shared at the same time by the nationalist or the communist). The nationalists are opposed to the Christian religion, because of its connection with imperialistic powers. They resent the so-called " Toleration Clauses " in Treaties, which made missionary propaganda possible. They maintain that all missionary schools should be under

the control of the Chinese government, and that the Christian Churches should be registered with the government. The communists are opposed to Christianity, because they regard religion as a weapon in the hands of the oppressors, and because Christianity is the worst or most powerful religion ; therefore they bend all their energies towards attacking it.

In the meantime, however, ever since the first years of the war, a movement for indigenisation of the Christian religion has been under way. The Christian groups, though less than one per cent of China's total population, constitute a rather influential force in China. The Christian leaders in China feel that Christianity is not necessarily bound up with foreign imperialism, capitalism or superstition. They realise that there is, in Christianity, a power and a truth which China needs, but at the same time they feel that the responsibility for maintaining the Christian Church and for spreading the Christian Gospel must rest upon the shoulders of the Chinese Christians. Furthermore, they feel convinced that the Christian Gospel must be so understood and interpreted, that it will call forth the best that there is in China's spiritual heritage. This is what we mean by indigenous Christianity. To be sure, Christianity will remain a universal religion, but no race can claim a real comprehension of Christianity unless it is the fruit of its own experience.

P. C. HSU.

BOOK REVIEWS

Our Paganism

DIE GÖTTER DES ABENDLANDES, von Theophil Spoerri. *Furche Verlag, Berlin, 3 RM.*

The recent popularity of the word "secularism" has its disadvantages. Too easily we accept it as a term describing all conceptions of life which have dissociated themselves from the "official" religions. If we do so we forget that the soul of man is incurably religious ("naturaliter religiosa" not "christiana"). Few indeed are the human beings in whose lives the cold atmosphere of the secular reigns completely. With most of us the loss of one religion means the advent of another. We must have some absolute, something that is beyond question, something supremely worth while, which we can decorate with the symptoms of divinity: "awfulness", "mystery", "sacredness", and the like.

To discover these unorganised but none the less powerful cults one wants the trained eye of the diagnostician, who can look behind the surface of events and movements. Those equipped with this faculty discover strange gods, unexpected idols, some of them as old as humanity, some brand-new, but all of them characterized by the fact that they offer escape from the morass of the meaningless and secular.

Professor Spoerri is such a master of diagnosis. If he wants to find the real religions of our time he reads between the lines on every page of the book of life and does not only turn to the pages with such titles as Church, Theology and Religion. And he can afford to do so, because he does not blur distinctions. He knows the demarcation line between God and idol, between true and false "sacralism". For him "Paganism is decentralised religion", that is to say, it is religion which has lost the true perspective. Paganism is the deification of that which is not God. It is the glorification of the body, of life, of science, of nation, of class, of nature, of Eros — in short of a host of realities, none of which is the true centre of life. This false sacralism is perhaps more typical of our time than the much discussed secularism. It is also much more dangerous. Secularism is emptiness and calls, therefore, for fulfilment. Paganism is false riches, which may soothe men into unreal satisfactions.

Secularism may mean a great spring-cleaning, which helps us to do away with the antiquated, the formal, the outward. Paganism is an attempt to steal that which can only be received as a gift.

The "gods of the Western World" are the real "opiates for the people". They can only be overcome by faith in a *living* God.

V. 't H.

Mysterium Christi

MYSTERIUM CHRISTI, CHRISTOLOGISCHE STUDIEN BRITISCHER UND DEUTSCHER THEOLOGEN, herausgegeben von Bischof C.G.K. Bell und Prof. D. Adolf Deissmann. *Deutsch: Furche Verlag, Berlin, 16 RM; English: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., London.*

This is a unique publication. We have had a good many composite publications in which theologians of one nation or of one confession have cooperated, but this is probably the first which gives us the thorough treatment of one central theological subject by theologians of different nations as well as confessions. The book has grown out of discussions between German and British theologians, initiated by the Bishop of Chichester.

Better than conference reports or resolutions, this rich volume communicates the very best of the spirit of the movements for Church unity. It is a fine example of the sharing of life which must come if we are to take "Stockholm" and "Lausanne" seriously. This exchange of convictions about the fundamentals of Christian faith is both basis and result of the new fellowship between the Churches. We cannot come nearer to each other without it. And the nearer we come to each other the more of it we shall have.

It would be interesting to study the differences between the German and British contributions to the common Christological theme. But much more important is the other question: is there a common direction in the thinking of Christians of these two great nations about the meaning of Christ? One must be careful not to draw too hasty conclusions. After all, neither group is completely representative of the theology of their nation. Some of the most notable names in both countries are not included among the authors. Nevertheless the volume is sufficiently comprehensive in scope and the authors are sufficiently representative of important trends of theological thought to permit us to draw some conclusions.

The most important one is probably this — that at least in the realm of Christology, theologians are tending very definitely to a reconsideration of some of the basic tenets of the generally accepted "liberal" view of the pre-war period. The concentration of interest upon the "Jesus of History" to the exclusion of the "Christ of Faith" seems to be passing. If Sir Edwyn Hoskyns says: "We cannot explain or appreciate the Jesus of History, unless by faith we experience and confess Him as the living Christ. The sentence is, however, only then a true description of the meaning of the New Testament if we add: the Christ of Faith does not exist without the reality of the Jesus of History. In the New Testament these two truths are inseparably connected", he is probably voicing the consensus of opinion of his co-authors.

This is a tremendous gain. It means, however, that a great deal of the work of former generations will have to be done over again. For the moment it may mean great uncertainty as many of us will have to give up certain conceptions about the historical Jesus, which were given to us by the "Jesus of History" theology. But in the long run it will mean great enrichment as we discover the Jesus Christ upon Whom the Church was founded and Who was "the Word made flesh".

V. 't H. .

The Jewish Question

THE JEW AND HIS NEIGHBOUR. A STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF ANTI-SEMITISM, by James W. Parkes, M.A. *Publishers: Student Christian Movement Press, London. Price: 5/-*

There are few problems more perplexing in the realm of interracial relationship than the problem of Jews and Gentiles, especially in Europe, an age long problem which meets with renewed difficulties in our day.

Mr. Parkes, through his work with the University League of Nations Union, at the Student Movement House in England and as a Secretary of International Student Service, has, by coming to know students of different races and nationalities, gained a unique experience. By a specialised and thorough study of historical and other reasons for the present recrudescence of anti-Semitism he is now adding an important contribution to his practical work among students.

This book of some two hundred pages represents a wealth of reading on the subject. It deals in clear, alert and well balanced chapters with the religious, economic, political and racial elements in anti-Semitism, it brings into light the essential elements of the

subject. It shows a dispassionate and sympathetic attitude towards the Jews and tells of the part they have played in bringing about the present state of enmity and prejudice, which is so strong against them, and of their responsibility for replacing it by better understanding and human cooperation. In a convincing way it clearly portrays the harmful attitude of the Christian Church and of Christians from the Middle Ages to our day. In his treatment Mr. Parkes is non-dogmatic, avoids sentimentality and a priori intellectual judgment and without undue optimism, but in a constructive way, he succeeds in this book in making one think anew, in a truer perspective, about the perplexing problems of anti-Semitism. He justifies his presupposition "that in dealing with the Jewish problem I am dealing with a problem which has its roots in history and in human nature, and not in anything supernatural, so that, given the patience and the goodwill requisite, it is one which can be unravelled by human intelligence and resolved by human action".

H. L. H.

The Revival of Revivalism

UNTER GOTTES FÜHRUNG. Herausgegeben von J. Ferdinand Laun:
Leopold Klotz Verlag, Gotha: 3.— RM.

With the possible exception of "Barthianism" no movement of religious life is more generally discussed in Federation circles than the one which goes by the names of "Oxford Group Movement" or "Buchmanism". So far the movement had not expressed itself very often in a literary form. The appearance of Mr. Laun's book, which interprets its genius in a very characteristic way, is therefore a matter of importance to all those, who have not taken part in the "houseparties" of the movement but would come to know it better.

Mr. Laun's book is as it were a houseparty in printed form. It brings testimonies of men and women of different nations whose lives have been changed by the influence of the "groups". Better perhaps than any statements about the movement they give us an idea of its aims and methods.

This is not the place to attempt a discussion about the value of this modern revivalism. It is sufficient to indicate certain points which will have to be taken into account in forming a personal opinion about it. In the first place it is obvious that the movement meets a widely felt need — the one for a more personal, direct form of evangelism.

In a time of sophistication, of world-wide problems and multitudes of "isms" there are many who find their deepest personal questions unanswered. They long for a word of God that addresses them personally and not their intellects alone. We may be grateful to the Oxford groups that they remind us so forcefully of this need and that they attempt to meet it. Another important point is that the movement helps many to rediscover that Christianity does not begin with the changing of one's life, but rather with the changing of oneself. With all its emphasis on the fruits of conversion it does not forget that the tree is before the fruit.

But the question as to the character of this conversion remains. According to most members of the groups conversion is here taken in the sense of the primitive Christian Community. It is claimed that the experience of the houseparties is essentially the same as the experience of the first century Christians. Is this true? I do not believe it. The groups — as all movements of revivalism from Wesley to our own days — reproduce only one side of the original Christian message. And by insisting on that one side they tend to commit the same mistake as older forms of pietism which have often given rise to grave misconceptions of Christianity and to the most violent reactions. The one side is the side of sanctification. But a sanctification which is not continually checked by the knowledge that sanctification is never at our disposal, but rather a gift which God gives when and where He wills it — is a human anticipation of the divine gift.

These are not theological niceties. They are rather central questions for the future of Christianity. The question is really whether faith deals finally with things seen in our lives or rather with things for which we hope but which we do not see because they remain in God's hands.

What we need is not a revival of revivalism. It is rather a conversion of revivalism to a more God-centred testimony of the gospel. We are already far too much interested in our own souls. But we are not sufficiently interested in God's promises.

V. 't H.

DIENST AM VOLK, EIN BIBELSTUDIUM, von Theodor Brandt. *Furche Verlag, Berlin, 121 S, kasch 3.— RM, Lwd. 3.50 RM.*

Das Büchlein gibt eine treffliche Anleitung, die Frage nach dem Dienst des Christen an seinem Volk, die in so vielen Ländern jetzt wieder ganz brennend geworden ist, auf klarer biblischer Grundlage

und nach allen Seiten hin zu studieren. Wie in dem gleichfalls im Furche Verlag erschienenen wohlbekannten Büchlein von Johannes Weise, "Christus", werden in einzelnen (11) Abschnitten, die in je 7 Unterabschnitte eingeteilt sind, auf Grund ausgezeichnet gewählter biblischer Zitate die Gesetze eines gottgeheiligten Volkslebens aufgezeigt.

"Der eine Gott und das eine Volk; die Gottesordnungen im Volksleben; die politische Haltung der Propheten; die Verkünder der sozialen Gerechtigkeit; Weltgericht und Welterlösung"—diese Titel, herausgegriffen aus der Fülle der Themen, lassen die Weite, Tiefe und Gegenwartsbedeutung der Studien ahnen. Israel steht im Mittelpunkt, das Alte Testament kommt in seiner hohen geistlichen Bedeutung wieder zu Ehren, und doch ist alles zur gegenwärtigen Lage gesprochen. Es tritt mit überraschender Deutlichkeit heraus, wie sich ein gottgeheiligtes Volksleben auch heute noch am Leben des Gottesvolkes zu orientieren hat.

J. M.

Notes on Contributors and Articles

SUZANNE DE DIETRICH is Vice Chairman of the French Student Christian Movement and Vice Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation. In her article she gives a more elaborate edition of a paper presented at the Zuylenveld Retreat of Student Movement Leaders.

THEOPHIL SPOERRI is professor of literature at the University of Zürich. For many years he has been a faithful friend and leader of the Swiss Student Christian Movement. His most well known books are : *Präludium zur Poesie* and *Die Götter des Abendlandes*, the second of which is reviewed in this number. His article in this number contains the substance of an address given to Swiss S.C.M. leaders.

PIERRE MAURY was formerly general secretary of the French Student Christian Movement. He is at present a secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation and editor of *Foi et Vie*. His article is also largely based on a paper presented to the Zuylenveld Retreat.

NICOL MACNICOL has been for many years a leading missionary of the United Free Church of Scotland. He is at present travelling in India with a special commission under the auspices of the International Missionary Council to study Christian higher education in that country. He is the author of *Indian Theism*, *Psalms of Maharrati Saints*, *India in the Dark Wood*, etc.

D. K. PICKEN is Master of Ormond College, University of Melbourne and Chairman of the Australian Student Christian Movement. He has just completed a tour through Great Britain and Europe which has brought him into close touch with the various student Christian movements. He has also taken part in the consultations of the Federation's Message Commission of which he is a member.

V. V. ZENKOVSKY is professor of Pedagogy and Chairman of the Russian Student Christian Movement outside Russia. Of his article he writes : " I should like to explain what the reasons are for the closeness of our movement to the Church. I hope that thus, an answer may be given to the question recently put to me by a representative of the Chinese S.C.M. : ' Why has the Russian Movement such a great love for the Orthodox Church ? ' "

H. C. WEILAND is a student of classical languages at the University of Utrecht. His article is the result of his participation in one of the message study circles of the Dutch Student Christian Movement.

W. S. TINDAL is study secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland. During the past year he has been leading the study of the message in the British Movement.

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Those who are interested in the work of the Message Commission should read the Message Paper: No. 1, obtainable through *The Student World*. A further publication of the Message Commission is to follow in the early summer. It will take the form of a symposium with contributions from Reinhold Niebuhr (U.S.A.), V. V. Zenkovsky (Russia), Pierre Maury (France) and P.C. Hsu (China).

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It is not owing to a change in editorial policy, but rather owing to lack of finance and space, that the present number is so exclusively English in language. We are hoping, however, that the material situation of *The Student World* may soon change sufficiently to enable us to become again truly international in our language policy.

What we need is more subscribers. Will our readers not help to find them? A few days ago a Welsh student sent us on his own initiative a list of 20 subscriptions which he got in a few days among the students of his own college. Will not other readers follow suit?